

Sewanee Review

APRIL-JUNE, 1939

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When totalitarian nations are energetically destroying the democratic belief in the integrity of the individual and are frantically engaged in justifying tyranny by the appeal to the new Moloch of "The State", it is timely to recall the career of John Morley. Mrs. Knickerbocker, A. B. of Vassar and A. M. of the University of Maine, notes in this essay the sturdy gospel and character of "Honest John Morley", the centenary of whose birth was on Christmas Eve, 1938.

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The author of this essay is a member of the Department of Romance Languages of the University of California. He traces the fiction of racial superiority, now so plausibly being offered the German people as solemn truth, to its source in Comte Gobineau, a Frenchman of the post-Revolutionary period. Gobineau's romantic racialism, ironically enough, seeped into the German consciousness in the nineteenth century, fused with Hegelian Teutonic megalomania, exciting German subjectivists like Nietzsche, Treitschke, and Spengler. It is a significant strand of modern materialistic mysticism. It has had already a horrible holocaust in the tortures of Jews in Germany and Central Europe.

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Dr. Eliseo Vivas, of the Department of Philosophy in the University of Wisconsin, is well-known to readers of critical quarterlies. He is an Advisory Editor of THE KENTON REVIEW. In "The Fanatic as Type" he considers the mental processes of people with fixed ideas.

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Dr. L. Robert Lind is Professor of Classics in Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Indiana.

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From time to time, the SEWANEE REVIEW publishes essays in praise of England. The present essay might appropriately be entitled, "Literary Scholar on Holiday in England": it is a pleasant excursion from the dusty alcoves of the British Museum. Through the notes of different English birds the author artistically evokes the spirit both of England and of English poetry.

Dr. Nichols is at the University of Minnesota, Department of English.

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This REVIEW first recognized the peculiar qualities of the Fugitive Poets of Nashville, of whom Merrill Moore is not the least second. The recent publication of Dr. Moore's extraordinarily experimental sonnets in his M: ONE THOUSAND AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SONNETS is too significant an event to pass without special notice. The editor invited Dudley Fitts, poet and critic of New England, to analyze and comment upon Dr. Moore's revealing sonnets and he has done so with keen insight.

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by Ward Ritchie

“SEWANEE was perhaps nearer to what I had always dreamed a college to be than any of our modern and western universities. I had discovered it through the SEWANEE REVIEW and I found it to be all that I could have hoped for. Years later when I saw Oxford I realized what had been its model.

“Up till then I had been swept along on the stream of the middle twenties and had taken, in the main, such courses as would eventually lead me to law school. The musty sandstone library at Sewanee, crowded with portraits and relics and old books, with its Gothic windows, its ivy and its meadow of green lawn; and the nights when I’d sit with one or two or three others under the elms on the edge of the Dixie Highway talking of George Moore, Rossetti and Paul Cezanne made me impatient with the future I was planning. . . .”

Ward Ritchie, “The Annual of Bookmaking, 1938”

—THE COLOPHON

NOTE: This quotation is by one of America’s best known artist-printers, founder of the Ward Ritchie Press of Los Angeles, California, and appears in the current volume of THE COLOPHON.

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APRIL-JUNE, 1939

by Frances W. Knickerbocker

THE LEGACY OF JOHN MORLEY

BORN a hundred years ago, on December 24, 1838, John Morley, statesman and man of letters, may seem gone with the Victorians. Yet the faith for which he worked and lived makes him actually a prophet for our own desperate day. In our struggle to save the dignity and liberty of man, our war against the causes of war, the spirit of John Morley lives on.

"An animated, hopeful, interesting, and on the whole, either by reason of, or in spite of, its perpetual polemics, a happy generation. . . a generation of intrepid effort forward": so Morley described the years from 1860 to 1890 in which his own main work was done. For the thinking of the young Liberals of the sixties and seventies was as adventurous as that of their grandsons who have marched, like Mr. Stephen Spender, *Forward from Liberalism*. These mid-Victorians had taken in their stride the new theory of evolution and were reshaping with it the ideas of individual liberty and social progress inherited from their master John Stuart Mill. They were using the strength of their Evangelical training not only to break the Evangelical bonds on their own lives but to clear new paths for thought and art and society. If their

tone was often combative that was because they were fighting, not religion, but an intolerant orthodoxy that seemed to them the enemy, not only of the new truths of science and Biblical criticism, but of the very freedom of the mind to seek the truth. And if they seem to us over-confident of continuing progress, they were too keenly aware of industrial misery and social wrong to be complacent. In their constant fight for freedom of thought and social justice they were truly Victorian. But their fight was our fight.

In the early work of Morley that is his chief contribution to English thought and letters, the *Critical Miscellanies*, the *Voltaire*, *Rousseau*, and *Diderot*, and the *On Compromise*, there is, along with much that was of and for his own day, something that survives. The form which Morley devised and which he called the "historical study" was itself shaped by the spirit of the sixties. Its aim, as he explained in his 1867 *Edmund Burke*, was not a portrait of a personality, but "a criticism of his hero's relations and contributions" to the main movements of his time. In fact Morley was doing in the essay what his friend George Eliot was doing in the novel: applying the new ideas of cause and consequence revealed by Spencer and Darwin; illustrating the laws of character, the effects of environment, that bind the individual to the common lot. But it will not do to dismiss this type of criticism as merely mid-Victorian. For the Darwinian revelation, like the later Marxist one, produced a social criticism, a view of thought and literature as products of society that is itself no new discovery of either scientists or Marxists. But unlike some of our Marxist critics, Morley knew that for a work of art social content is not enough. He treated Byron and Carlyle and Wordsworth as great social forces, but he did not quite forget that they were also artists. And in the best of his studies he learned to blend biography with social and literary criticism, to make the figure live in the age.

The French Studies were written boldly and deliberately to refute Carlyle's diatribes against the "sceptical" eighteenth century. For some of these French thinkers, Diderot, Turgot, Condorcet, were the spiritual ancestors of Morley's own faith in reason and in human betterment. And so he wrote these studies to revive for his own Liberal generation their forgotten forefathers, to reinterpret such reviled, misunderstood figures as Voltaire and Rous-

seau. Of course some of his argumentative passages are now outdated; parts of his work have been superseded by later research. Modern biographers with fuller knowledge and more searching insight have brought these pioneers of thought nearer to our time. But Morley's work has held its place in the comparative history of eighteenth century French and English thought; his estimates have been in the main accepted. For in the French Studies Morley expressed that European mind that now seems so shattered. And he traced the outline of a liberal way of life that has outlived his period and his purpose.

It is *On Compromise* that is most read today. To many a young man of the seventies and eighties, as to young Edward Grey, the meaning of *On Compromise*, "It makes all the difference in the world whether we put Truth in the first place or the second place", became a part of his very being. One of these young men, who became a Canon of the Church of England, wrote that Morley had meant more to him than he could ever weigh: "His *Compromise* marked an epoch in my mental and moral life, and in many ways he seemed to me more Christian than the average Christian." This secret of the *Compromise* is simply the intense conviction that makes it, as it has been called, "the moral portrait of the author". Though parts of it discuss questions of religious conformity that are no longer burning issues, its clear vision of the dangers of compromise with untruth, of surrender to violence, was never more timely. *On Compromise* still stands in the great succession of Milton and Mill as a dateless plea for the integrity and freedom of man's mind.

Of literary form, Morley confessed, he took in his crowded journalist years too little thought. But he was always sure that style is a matter of ideas first, of knowing what you mean and finding the right word. And the firmly articulated structure of every article and essay he ever wrote shows the "fundamental brainwork" behind his prose. If his sentences are sometimes wordy, it is not because his thinking was muddled. The defects of his early style, the too-insistent rhythms, the long-drawn cadences, the cumbrous phrases, came partly from over-exposure to the ample periods of Burke and those other orators and aphorists whom he reread and loved, partly from his own eagerly argu-

mentative, exhorting mood, partly from that sheer Victorian delight in an "eloquence" so alien to our sterner taste. But Morley's friends dealt firmly with his weaknesses: Meredith wittily hit off his over-precision "as from an old maid to an errand-boy"; and Frederick Harrison warned him of his verbal excesses and urged him to cultivate simplicity. How the sense for style grew upon him is shown by his own careful revisions for sound and cadence, and by his keen criticism of Macaulay's "hard modulations and shallow cadences". Indeed he once told an audience of students that the worst thing that could happen to them would be to try to write like the giants, Carlyle, or Macaulay, or Ruskin, and added, "If we are now on our way to a quieter style, I am not sorry for it. Truth is quiet." Out of his rigorous experience of Parliament and platform, out of his own fearless spirit, he did win the stirring simplicity of some of his later writings and speeches, like that echoing refrain of his Manchester speech before the Boer War, "It will still be wrong". Out of his grief for the death of Mill came his moving adagio:

The nightingale that he longed for fills the darkness with music, but not for the ear of the dead master; he rests in the deeper darkness where the silence is unbroken for ever.

For right expression, Morley knew, is a part of character. Sanity, *justesse*—the fair mind—are qualities within our reach. "And with this temper it is easier to see the truth, what things really are." In passages that belong to our literature Morley's style did reach his own clear goal, "the steadfast use of a language in which truth can be told".

II.

Though Morley's writings and his public life touched many themes, it was one battle that he fought from first to last, the battle for a free mind and for a better way of life. In those fighting years of his *Fortnightly Review* editorship, the years recorded in Mr. F. W. Hirst's *Early Life and Letters of John Morley*, some of his causes, like his brief crusades for Republicanism and for the Disestablishment of the Church of England, were soon lost; others, like the campaign for national education, and for the rights of organized labor, were eventually won. From 1873 to 1886 Morley

worked with Joseph Chamberlain for the new social Liberalism of the "Radical Programme", the first political answer to the needs of the newly enfranchised voters, a programme for the coming democracy. It was pushed aside because Gladstone tried to carry the whole democratic movement into the cause of Irish Home Rule. The defeat of his Home Rule Bill in 1886, which drove Chamberlain into exile among the Unionists, not only split the Liberal Party but killed its chance of becoming "the party of the future". And when Morley took up the Irish cause and accepted the brief Irish Secretaryship, there was for him, as for his leader, no turning back.

But the movement toward a new Liberalism was overpowered by forces too strong even for a Gladstone. For the rise of Nationalism and Imperialism through the eighties and nineties was sweeping the public mind away from social reform at home or Cobden's internationalism abroad. More and more Morley was drawn into the war against Militarism, "the point-blank opposite of Liberalism". As far back as the Franco-Prussian War he had begun to realize the growing threat of the nationalist temper to European democracy and peace. In the *Fortnightly* he had steadily opposed Disraeli's foreign policy through the Turkish-Balkan crisis, and fearlessly exposed the futility of the first "peace with honor" of 1878. He had condemned such needless, criminal frontier wars as the Zulu War. And through the tumult and the shouting of the Boer War years Morley, with Harcourt and Campbell-Bannerman, had stood firm and spoken out. In that great Manchester speech that silenced the noisy Jingoës with its ringing challenge, "It will still be wrong", Morley was standing, as Dr. Fosdick has said, "nearer where Christ intended His church to stand than the church has often been."

Through Morley's later writings, his Romanes Lecture on Machiavelli, his study of Cromwell, his reviews of books on Imperialism and democracy by Seeley and Maine and Lecky and Hobhouse, there run his grave questions why democracy had not secured peace, his constant search for the roots of war, his challenge to those who were distorting Darwinism, using "the survival of the fittest" to justify violence and glorify brutality.

III.

The story of Morley's resignation with John Burns from the Cabinet in August, 1914, is told in his own *Memorandum on Resignation*, the record that he left to be made public after his death. However the tremendous issues involved may be judged by history, Morley himself could have done no other than to "testify for convictions". His whole life spent in the ways of reason and of peace drove him to his resignation.

"This moral devastation", he wrote in his hour of decision, "is a worse incident of war even than human carnage, and all the other curses with which war lashes its victims and dupes." He lived to see the devastation of much for which he had worked; to see the promises of rulers broken, old parties shattered, old values swept away. Victorian Liberalism had failed to humanize the industrial order out of which it grew. For the needs of a new age it was not enough. But it had kept alive the faith that men are moved, not only by their economic needs but by their minds and spirits.

For that great legacy of Liberalism there are no finer words than those of Morley's *Recollections*:

Respect for the dignity and worth of the individual is its root. It stands for pursuit of social good against class interest or dynastic interest. It stands for the subjection to human judgment of all claims of external authority. . .

The dignity of the individual; the search for the common good; the freedom of the mind: that is the Liberalism of John Morley. Not a political technique or a party programme; more than universal suffrage or civil liberties. It is a temper of mind, a way of life. Today this idea of man as a rational, an inviolable soul, threatened by the totalitarian states as never before, has become the cause of us all. The dignity of the human personality, we see now, is the very root of our democracy. "When the dignity of the human soul is denied in great parts of the world", Secretary Hull has warned, "no one of us can be sure that his country or even his home is safe." That great prophet and artist of our time,

Thomas Mann, has just echoed Morley's very words in his ringing call, *The Coming Victory of Democracy*, his appeal for a youthful, awakened democracy to save the values of spiritual freedom. For the heart of John Morley's Liberalism is the heart of Thomas Mann's democracy, belief in "that inalienable dignity of man which no force, however humiliating, can destroy".

by L. Robert Lind

MONTAIGNE

(for his translator, J. Z.)

Not of those spirits who welcomed the golden day
 Blossomed of Greece and Rome, the Renaissance,
 Foregathering not in flowery-fair plaisance
To quicken with art the hours that else were grey;
Not of those giants who broke a tremendous way
 For men to follow, he found a rare aisance
 In his own mind and time and corner of France,
With Plutarch and Seneca and his own Essais.

Deep-caverned within the arcanum of thought
 No less than in his tower-chamber, bent
 On finding his true self and stripping bare
That gentle soul, in leisure lapped, he sought
 Epicurean wisdom and content
 Where wit and books conspired against despair.

by Arnold H. Rowbotham

GOBINEAU AND THE ARYAN TERROR

AS an ethnological theory, "Aryanism" has been examined and rejected by experts but it has persisted as a social and political theory and in recent times it is being used to give moral support to a new type of nationalism in which the State takes over those functions of government slowly developed by the democracies of the West during the last two hundred years. As a social and political philosophy, "Aryanism" is the expression of the conviction that the moral excellencies of our civilization are derived from a single race, the Aryans, who are supposed to have sprung into being somewhere in the plateaux of Central Asia.

I

Aryanism, in theory, is the expression of an aristocratic ideal, an essential belief in pure racial stock as a necessary basis of leadership in human affairs. It is not surprising, therefore, that it should have found its first most active theoretical expositor in a Frenchman whose whole life and thought breathed the spirit of aristocracy. This man, Joseph-Arthur, Comte de Gobineau, was born in France in 1816 of a family of the lesser nobility. After an education gained chiefly in Switzerland, he settled down in Paris to earn a scanty living with his pen as journalist and author. It was the moment when Alexandre Dumas père, Eugène Sue, and others were making their reputation (and the fortunes of several newspapers) by writing *romans-feuilletons*. Gobineau wrote and published several of these serial stories, noteworthy for the verve of their style and their masterly resurrection of French history. It was at best, however, a precarious existence and when Alexis de Tocqueville, the historian of American democracy, offered the young author a post in his staff at the Foreign Office he accepted with gratitude. For the greater part of the next thirty years, Gob-

ineau served his country at Frankfort, Berne, Athens, Stockholm, and in Newfoundland, Brazil, and Persia. His diplomatic career gave him the opportunity to study the life and customs of the countries to which he was accredited. He was enormously interested in the traces of the past which he found there. In each country he used his brilliant powers of observation and his undoubted erudition to evoke the historical background of the place, to evaluate the heritage of tradition which was to be found there and to place that country within the framework of the ethnological system which he had already created. In Athens he immersed himself in the glories of ancient Greece and tried with his own hands to reproduce a little of the beauty of Hellenic sculpture. In Stockholm he lived again the heroic days of the Northern sagas. His years at Teheran gave him material for several volumes, notably his *History of the Persians*,¹ a brilliant though somewhat fantastic story of the Iranian people, and two small volumes on the *Religions and Philosophies of Central Asia*,² filled with extraordinarily acute observations on oriental psychology. For the young diplomat the study of history and race *mores* was a fascinating, almost a mystical, experience. He had the faculty of re-living, in his own mind, the ancient life of the country and of vitalizing the emergence of that past in the life of the present.

His years abroad, perhaps, kept him out of sympathetic touch with the contemporary life of his own land. Although he was acquainted with several of the well known figures of the period, with Renan, Mérimée, and others in France, with Wagner in Germany, with Bulwer Lytton in England, Gobineau remained all his life an *isolé*. He was at odds with his times. The contemporary development of democratic institutions in France was extremely distasteful to him. In the middle of the century we find him writing to his friend de Tocqueville, "All these dirty shirts (*blouses sales*) have so disgusted me, have so exaggerated my notions of the just and the true that I am almost capable of becoming a monk".³ His aristocratic hauteur kept him aloof from his fellows. His

¹*Histoire des Perses, d'après les auteurs orientaux, grecs et latins.* Paris, 1869. (2 vols).

²*Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale.* Paris, 1865.

³*Correspondance entre Alexis de Tocqueville et Arthur de Gobineau (1843-1859), publiée par L. Schemann.* Paris, 1908.

literary efforts did not aid his career in diplomacy and he complains that he is being looked upon as a man of letters by the diplomats and as a diplomat by men of letters. With a truly Rousseauistic conviction of the decadence of civilized society he shut himself up in the ivory tower of his aristocratic reserve and, as the years went by, it became more and more difficult for him to look with favor upon the rank and file of his fellow men. His latter years were brightened by the affection of a noble lady, the Countess de La Tour, and with the friendship of Richard Wagner, but disagreements with his colleagues, family troubles, and the ill success of his writings brought a sense of disillusionment. He imbibed the pessimism of Schopenhauer and the German philosophers of his school and sought refuge, finally, in an attitude of lofty stoicism.

His life and philosophy remained true, to the very last, to the principles expounded in the masterpiece which he had written at the early age of thirty-five, the *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races*.⁴ In each place that he lived he saw in everything around him the proofs of his aristocracy. This conviction grew, rather than diminished, as he advanced in age. When he was sixty-three, he put his ideas regarding his racial heritage in a work entitled *The History of Ottar Jarl, Norwegian Pirate... and of his Descendants*.⁵ This, one of the most remarkable family histories ever written, is his *apologia pro vita sua*. "I descend from Odin" is his text as he attempts to trace the history of his divine origin. It is said of Gobineau that one day visiting the Nordic ruins near Djursholm, he exclaimed to his companion "This is the city of Ottar Jarl. This is the place of my origin. I feel it". The work is permeated with this mystical conviction. There are, perforce, lacunae in the story where the records are lacking, (the author particularly bemoans a gap of a hundred years, from 1453 to 1550) but on the whole the author can trace, to his satisfaction, the course of the Viking blood down through the centuries until it reached

⁴*Essai sur l'Inégalité des Races humaines*. Paris 1853, 1855. (2 vols). An Eng. ed. entitled *The Moral and Intellectual Development of the Races* was published in Philadelphia in 1857 by H. Hotz (appendix by J. C. Nott). Another Eng. ed. was publ. in London in 1915, tr. by Adrian Collins with an intro. by the Nietzschean scholar Oscar Levy. Both these Eng. eds. were of the first book of the Essay only.

⁵*Histoire d'Ottar Jarl, pirate norvégien, conquérant du pays de Bray en Normandie et de sa descendance*. Paris, 1879.

him, Arthur Joseph de Gobineau, a French nobleman of the nineteenth century. He gloried in this rôle of nobleman when, in 1857, he purchased the château of Trye in Normandy, the country of his ancestors, where he lived with aristocratic dignity and the keenest satisfaction the life of a feudal nobleman.

But if the motive force of his life is to be found in his unfailing sense of aristocracy the center of his thought lies in his conception of the Race and its importance in human history. For Gobineau the question of Race in the development of civilization outweighed all others. The reason for the rise and fall of nations is to be found not in the effects of luxury, of fanaticism, of evil manners or of irreligion but in the nature of their blood mixture. The persistence of a culture is determined by the degree of purity of the stock. But history has proved that racial purity is hard to maintain. There is in man a dual urge of repulsion and attraction and the relation of these two elements working in the race explains its subsequent history. The strength of a people is determined only by the permanence of its stock, but this is difficult to maintain. Political conquest does not save a race. The conqueror, by his superior energy, may be predominant for a time but by the infiltration of the blood of the conquered, he finally falls a victim of the deadly process of miscegenation. So the course of all history is to be explained by this element of blood mixture.

This theory is developed at length in the two volumes of the *Essay* which were published in Paris in 1853 and 1855. Greatly to the chagrin of the author, who was profoundly convinced of the importance of the thesis, the work was badly received in France. The great Renan refused to write a review of the book. The author's friend, De Tocqueville, would have nothing to do with the theories expressed in it. "Permit me", he writes to Gobineau, "to have less confidence in you than in the goodness and justice of God".^{*} Prosper Mérimée, reporting on the fortunes of the *Essay* in Paris, humorously asserts that the reading public in the capital would apparently like to see the author burned alive.

But if it was rejected by his countrymen Gobineau's work had a better reception across the Rhine where it was gradually hailed as a valuable contribution to sociological and ethnological thought.

^{*}Corr. op. cit. p. 313.

The high priest of the Gobineau cult in Germany, Professor Ludwig Schemann, towards the end of the century, revived not only the *Essay* but also the other works of Gobineau and the movement culminated in the establishment of a *Gobineau-Vereinigung*. Since that time it has hardly ceased to influence German thought. The teutonophile Englishman William Houston Chamberlain, in his important *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, expressed his debt to Gobineau, (even though he rejected completely the validity of the main thesis of the *Essay*). Probably the most striking influence, however, is to be found in Nietzsche. The doctrine of the Superman, the master-and-slave division of humanity, the rejection of Christian ethics for a philosophy of force, all these Nietzschean ideas are to be found in the works of the French writer. It may well be said, therefore, that Germany is the adopted country of the *Essay* and it is not surprising that the moment should arrive when a German leader should make of these theories one of the tools of his political opportunism and justification of his racial terrorism.

II

The purpose of Gobineau's *Essay*, according to the author, was "to fix and determine the principle of death in all societies and to trace its effects on the lives of the nations of whom history has left us a record". The book falls in the class of those works, such as Bossuet's *Discourse on Universal History*, which attempt to explain the story of civilization in terms of a single, and often predetermined, thesis. It substitutes for Bossuet's Divine Providence the idea of a Chosen People, the Aryans, and the work is the story of the latter's dissemination and gradual corruption. The author first establishes a hierarchy of the races. At the bottom is the negro, whose determining characteristics are blind appetite, predominance of the senses, and an instability of desires. On the middle level is the yellow race with tendencies toward mediocrity (a damning characteristic in the eyes of the author), a love of the practical and a respect for custom. At the top of this hierarchy is the white race and for them Gobineau (borrowing perhaps from Montesquieu) chooses Honor as the motive of conduct. Having determined the anthropological basis for his system he then pro-

ceeds to historical considerations. Here, strangely enough, he falls back on the Biblical legend of the sons of Noah. This furnishes interesting evidence of his fundamental conservatism. Throughout his work, Gobineau pays lip service to the Christian faith, even while the logical course of his ideas leads him to a rejection of religion as a vital influence in human culture. The lord of the manor of Trye, who attended religious services every Sunday out of a feeling of *noblesse oblige*, accepted organized religion as an ally of tradition and therefore of aristocracy. He saw no inconsistency, therefore, in basing his system on the ancient legend of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

The Aryans were, then, a branch of the family of Japheth who, in the course of its migrations, had come to rest somewhere on the plateaux of Central Asia. As he describes this ideal race the language of the writer forsakes the calm precision of the scientist and adopts the lyrical accents of the poet. "Everything great, noble and fruitful on this earth which the mind of man has devised", he proclaims, "science, art, civilization, brings the observer to a single point, comes from a single germ, results from a single thought, belongs to only one family the different branches of which have reigned in all civilized countries of the universe".¹ In other words: The history of civilization is the history of the Aryan.

This race of heroes in due time migrated from the Central Asian plateaux. One branch went southward in the direction of Assyria where they mingled with the yellow sons of Ham. Another branch met the sons of Shem who introduced the black strain into their blood. By these mixtures the sons of Shem and Ham became responsible for all the corrupting influences in subsequent racial development. The Semitic mixture then turned on the Hamitic and, subduing them, produced the Mediterranean peoples and started the movement whereby the principle of authority seeped gradually from the topmost stratum of society downward until it permeated the whole, producing a vast mediocrity and creating modern democracy. Gobineau, while admitting certain good effects of the Semitic invasion of Europe, sees in the movement a vast degrading force, the chief implement of disaster in the West.

In this semitizing of Europe the Hebrews imitated their racial

¹*Essai*, I. vii. *Dédicace*. (The references are to the 4th. ed.)

brothers (to use the words of the Baron de Seillière) "as the French provincial imitates the Parisian". Gobineau's attitude towards the Jew is not entirely consistent. As a believer in the supreme virtue of the persistence of racial stock, he is forced to praise this quality in the Hebrew people but he includes them in his condemnation of the Semitic races and, in general, he sees in them only a disturbing factor on all peoples, which has led critics to believe that his theories imply anti-semiticism, in the modern implication of the term.

While the Semitic peoples were being established in south eastern Asia, a wandering group of Aryans had reached the valley of the Nile, imposed themselves on the black race there, and founded the Egyptian race. Below the Pamir plateau the Aryans had become the Aryas of India. Here the caste system (the definite social distinction between the élite and the pariah) enabled the Aryan to retain for a time the purity of his blood but finally Buddhism was introduced and, dealing a vital blow to Brahmanism, hastened the decadence of the Hindu Aryan.

So, several centuries before Christ, there were signs everywhere of the growing corruption of the god-like Aryan stock. The subsequent history of the race is the story of the persistence of this purity, in a modified degree, in certain "oases" of culture: the Aryas of India, the Iranians of Persia, the Hellenic Greeks and the Sarmates (fathers of the Germanic tribes). The problem of China caused the author some difficulty, since he maintained that no great nation could exist without the presence of Aryan blood. He solved the problem by asserting that, in the earliest times, a band of Aryan Hindu warriors had invaded the country and imposed their strain on the natives. How this mixture resulted in customs of universal mediocrity, the exact opposite to the characteristics of the conquerors, Gobineau never satisfactorily explained. Problems of this kind, which seem to present insuperable difficulties, are inherent in a system based on such sweeping generalizations. The author never allowed himself to be worried by contradictions of detail but the number of the contradictions, as Houston Chamberlain says, "relegates the work to the hybrid class of scientific phantasmagoria".

Having followed the god-like Aryans through Asia and North-

ern Africa, we are now brought to Europe where Gobineau finds striking support of his theories. It was Greece which was first in the path of the flood of Semitic corruption sweeping northward from Asia; Greece, who in the legends of the Titans retained for centuries the story of the Aryan protagonists of the race. Gobineau asserts that the first stages of miscegenation produced only good. Theseus was a real Aryan, a cousin of the Vikings. Ulysses, on the other hand, was a fine type of the Semitized Aryan. The Homeric age represents the period when the effect of decadence through blood mixture had not begun to show its effects.

Two aspects of Greek culture, in particular, received the author's attention. The first was Greek art and philosophy which Gobineau admired so profoundly (even while, he significantly adds, he "reserves his respect for more essential things").⁴ It is not surprising, in view of his idea of the Aryan, to find him asserting that the "glory of Greece" owed its source to the infiltration of the Semitic blood, just as had been the case with Assyria and Egypt. The pure Aryan was a man of action, a devotee of the cult of energy. He lived in an atmosphere of strife. His baptism was of blood; his career that of the sword. He was a doer and not a thinker. There is in this glorification of energy an implied contempt for the intellect and the artistry of man. The Aryan rose to his pre-eminent place as a leader through his physical gifts, and his moral superiority lay in certain essential characteristics which Gobineau never clearly explained. Herein lies the glaring weakness of his system. It is apparent, if we follow the author's ideas to their logical conclusion, that the life of thought, the products of art and philosophy, become a kind of inferior substitute for energy, on a lower moral level. Thus we arrive almost at the Rousseauist conclusion that the products of human skill and intelligence are a sign, if not a source, of decadence. In its moral implication the theory leads to the dictum that Might makes Right which is, indeed, the conclusion of the contemporary cult of Aryanism in Germany.

The other element which interested the author in Greece was its rôle in the development of the democratic state. Democracy, whether in its ancient Greek form or in the modern conception, was to Gobineau anathema. It was the antithesis of that individual-

⁴*ibid.*, II. 45.

ism which was the outstanding characteristic of the Aryan hero. It was the triumph of the "mud" (la boue) over the "élite". In his epic poem *Amadis* (written late in life and published posthumously) it is Ahriman, the arch-spirit of evil, who proudly boasts that he invented the rabble.* In the same poem, Theophrastus, a Gobinian Lucifer who is making war on the heroes, asserts that he is in alliance with the disbelievers in God, the traitors and the Masses:

*J'ai l'alliance de ces brutes
Qui marchent sans trop savoir où"*

The poet attributes to the people the spirit of the iconoclast ("Les plus fermes splendeurs ils les rendront suspectes"). He condemns in the masses an inability to choose their rulers, making them the prey of the demagogue. He pours his scorn on their unthinking restlessness and their tendency to "love and hate according to the newspapers". For Gobineau, the true course of history had been diverted by the revolution of 1789 which had opened the door "to violence and all the democratic atrocities". This feeling that he was living in the Dark Ages undoubtedly colored his whole pessimistic philosophy. It certainly caused him to minimize the importance of Greek culture.

Greece, then, had well reached the first stages of decay when it passed on its culture to Rome. In spite of its virility and energy, Gobineau sees little to admire in Roman civilization. He sees in the descendants of Romulus no real race. They were a mixed breed already enervated by miscegenation and fell an easy prey to the deadly effects of luxury introduced by the Semitic blood from the south. He scornfully condemns their culture as the product of the vilest plebeian and the humble bourgeois. This defilement became more widespread through the Roman system of colonization which encouraged intermarriage with native women throughout the empire. This had the effect of bringing about the "chaos of the nations" and the hastening of the final catastrophe. In some of the most eloquent pages of the *Essay* Gobineau graphically describes this universal decadence.

This gradual deterioration of racial stock produced by Semitic

**Amadis, poème*. Paris, 1887 (préface de la Comtesse de la Tour). p. 367.

¹⁰*ibid*, p. 284.

blood flooding in from the south was met by a similar movement from the north where the Aryan Celts and Gauls had already been tainted with the "frivolous", pacific yellow race and were rapidly losing the high seriousness of their Aryan character (and, incidentally, developing a genius for commerce). The Celts had at first enslaved their Mongolian visitors. This gives the author a chance to explain his views on slavery. He asserts that the tendency towards racial mixture often produces a condition whereby the inferior race places itself more or less willingly in a position of serfdom, as a social and economic necessity. He implies that the abuses of the slave system are not sufficient excuse to deny its social necessity. This championship of slavery is not surprising in a man who looked upon society as being divided into two classes, masters and servants. The term which Gobineau uses for the masses in *Amadis*: "la boue" is indicative of his attitude towards the great majority of his fellow beings. The humanitarian theories started by Montesquieu and his fellow philosophers a hundred years earlier had in no way modified his aristocracy and as he saw in human affairs no movement of progress, but rather the contrary, he did not concern himself with the problem of the progressive amelioration of the lot of the common man.

The Aryan-Celts, then, were rendered decadent by the blood of the yellow race and, even in his own time, Gobineau thought he could see, in the faces of the Breton peasants around him, the traces of this Mongolian defilement. As for the Slavs, the other branch of the Aryans which produced the Celts, he concurs in the contempt shown in the Russophobia of his time. He finds them "a stagnant marsh in which all superior ethnic strains, after a few hours of triumph find themselves engulfed".¹¹

So, by the end of the empire, the deadly work of miscegenation had brought complete disaster to almost the whole of Europe. Then, on this universal European decadence, burst the godlike Nordics, the Germanic and Scandivanian Aryans from the north. The newcomers belonged to two separate branches of the Aryan race. The one, the Sarmates, had descended from the Scythians who, intermarrying with the Amazons, had dwelt for a time in the Caucasus until, swinging north, they founded the people of the

¹¹*Essai*, II. 180.

Alans or Roxolans in central Russia, where in their city of Asgard, they already resembled the Germanic heroes of the sagas.¹³ Travelling still north and west, they split into two streams: the one occupying Pomerania and Southern Sweden as the Goths; and the other, under the name of the Sakas, going to Norway. These are the Aryans of the modern theories. With that restlessness characteristic of all the Aryans (for Gobineau's Chosen People have throughout history been nomads) they aryanized the Celtic mixture to the south and gave them vigor to oppose the first wave of the Germanic invasion. Meantime in the east the Aryan blood had become defiled by mixture with the Huns. In the West and North-west, away from danger of contact with other races, the divine stock remained pure. Even among these Germanic tribes however, the degree of racial purity differed, in direct relation to their geographical situation. The ascending order of this racial hierarchy is as follows: the Goths, the Vandals, the Lombards, the Burgundians, the Franks and the Anglo-Saxons, the latter being of the purest racial stock.¹⁴ These were the tribes who swept south to overwhelm the decadent Roman empire. That they were not able to revive the glories of Rome is due to the fact that they themselves were infected by the virus of miscegenation. The subsequent history of Europe is the story of this degeneration. All that is noble, all that is worth while in this history is explained by the persistence, or rather emergence in a certain group, of the original Aryan characteristics, producing what the author calls "golden flowers" (*fleurs d'or*)¹⁵ of culture such as the Italian Renaissance, or in the isolated individual, producing the "hero" of the Carlyle tradition.

We may pause here to ask: What were the characteristics of these god-like Nordics? Gobineau has left us no doubt as to their nature. Of noble stature, handsome appearance, and warlike disposition, the Aryan is superior to all others in the measure of his intelligence and his energy. These two elements dominate his character and determine his morality, good or bad. "Thus placed on a pedestal", says the author of the *Essay*, "standing out against

¹³*ibid.*, II, 341.

¹⁴*ibid.*, II, 360.

¹⁵*La Fleur d'Or*, publ. by Schemann in Strasbourg (1917) and in Paris (1923) was originally intended by Gobineau as an introduction to his *Renaissance*, a series of dramatic scenes publ. in Paris in 1877.

the background which he dominates, the Germanic Aryan is a powerful creature. His superiority over his *milieu* gives to everything he does or says a major importance."¹³ In politics he is an individualist. With him "man is everything and the nation nothing". When he associates with his fellows of other racial stock it is the association of master and servant, for the nobility of his features, the vigor and majesty of his tall stature and his muscular strength make of him a super-man. His whole life is regulated by the cult of freedom. Even the sacred terms "patriotism" and "home" have little meaning for him, being, in effect, restrictions on his personal liberty. He is his own judge of morality and ethics, committing his share of reprehensible acts (Gobineau will not deny him the "virility" of lawlessness) with a kind of godlike superiority over good and evil. For religion his imagination builds for him a pantheon where the gods are only dimly distinguished from the heroes of his race." His paradise is a Valhalla where wine and blood flow freely.

Under the stress of blood mixture with the Celts and the Slavs these characteristics are modified. He finally accepts the gods of his defilers and becomes an idolator. He adopts also the institution of priesthood, giving to the priest the task of civil administration. The criminal is given over to the latter for punishment, a living sacrifice not to the vengeance of man but to the anger of the gods. The center of the social law is the *odel*, the incontestable property of the chief, where he remains undisputed master. Political disintegration and corruption comes when the *odel* as the unit of society is displaced by the rule of the *konungr* or king and, in the act of homage of the feudal system, the original freedom of the original Aryan is destroyed. Under the feudal system the Nordic hero starts down the long descent to ruin. Slowly, inevitably the race becomes corrupt and the end, universal ruin, is the pessimistic conclusion of the Gobinist philosophy.

III

The significant element in this system of Gobineau is the peculiar nature of the Aryan's superiority. It is an amoral superiority

¹³ *Essai*, II. 365.

¹⁴ *ibid*, II. 367.

based on energy, power and an innate, arrogant sense of natural leadership. Stripped of its racial mysticism it makes of force a virtue and even a necessity. Carried to its logical conclusion, it would mean a return to barbarism, for Gobineau at least implies that all the arts of civilization are non-Aryan or, at best, the result of race mixture. Drawing up a balance sheet between the "pure" and the "impure" races, we have on the side of the latter the creation of music and art, the development of commerce, the evolution of social and political institutions and, on the side of the Aryan, merely a sense of divine origin and of the gifts of leadership and the upholding of the doctrines of Force. To follow the argument to its natural conclusions, then, it would seem that non-Aryan means civilization while Aryan means primitivism or even barbarism.

In its political aspects, Gobinist Aryanism denies all the progress of the last two hundred years. It returns the worker to serfdom; the bourgeois to the tyranny of the overlord. It takes from the masses any ability to raise themselves to higher levels or to maintain those higher standards. It makes the voice of the people the cry of the beast. It makes democracy ridiculous. It makes of social progress a hollow sham.

The importance of "Race" was beginning to be doubted even in Renan's time. In view of the greatness of the "mongrel" nations of the West today, the conception of a "pure Race" is absurd. But this has not prevented the use of the Aryan myth in recent times. In modern Germany, however, it is the application of the theory, and not the theory itself, which is dangerous. It is the conclusion that the modern Aryans, pure or impure, are above the Law. In this most recent exposition of Aryanism, the element of efficiency has displaced that of energy. The State, as a unit, has taken the place of the individual (which is certainly not what Gobineau preached) but the psychology is the same. The system implies: Firstly the doctrine of power and force, involving a contempt for the transcendental in man, religion and philosophy and the subordination of the intellectual products of man to the demands of the leader (that is, to political exigency) resulting in the death of free effort in art and *belles lettres*, if not in science; Secondly, a distrust and contempt of the ability of the ordinary human being to

govern his own affairs; to choose his rulers sanely or to make his laws wisely; a denial, in short, of the efficacy of modern democracy as a competent political system; Lastly, that the Aryan, being unique, is at odds with the rest of the world and that for his own salvation he must be constantly on guard against this hostility, thus making war an ever-present possibility.

So, after nearly a hundred years, the fantastic pessimistic philosophy of the brilliant French diplomat is seized upon and twisted to the use of a mystic demagogue who finds in the idea of the pure Aryan an excuse for thrusting civilization back dangerously near to the age of barbarism.

by Gerard Previn Meyer

PRAIRIE SUMMER

Incredible is the event of summer
The coming of August weather to the wheat
When the lightning, heavily ushered in by thunder,
Walks leprously along the lines of heat

And the husky clouds are low over the prairie
Drawing to them all voice from the terrain
And houses in the slack air are suddenly weary
With the terrible thirstiness of withheld rain.

What do we wait for then, and for what omen?
Under the storm our waiting minds will crash
The beast wind destroy us, man and woman:
Drive us into ourselves; under the lash

Of this confusion cower we must; our coming
Was under no calm star: how then require
That our being here be free of stormy drumming
That we be spared the falling bolt, the fire?

by Eliseo Vivas

THE FANATIC AS TYPE

"FANATIC"¹ is a vague term, since it may be applied to individuals who differ very widely from one another in many important respects. But we will find that fanatics have some characteristics in common. The most conspicuous of these is the manner in which fanatics choose an end as exclusively desirable and stick to it with an intensity which blinds them to other desirable human ends. The fanatic's attention may be engaged by a social desideratum or by a religious ideal or even by something quite trivial. The object varies. What distinguishes the fanatic from the normal individual is the intense manner in which the object is pursued. This intensity is perhaps the result of an organization of the fanatic's impulses into a very rigid pattern. But even if this explanation were not acceptable the facts are indisputable: the fanatic enjoys an economy of energy, a capacity to focus his attention without dispersion on his ideal, which is far above the ordinary.

It is frequently asserted that the fanatic is "narrow", but the term is misleading, for he often has a wide range of interests outside of his supreme end and he frequently gives evidence of amazing versatility. If a religious or a social reformer, he may study science and philosophy and look closely into the arts. He may write on literature and epistemology, or may show astonishing genius for military organization. He may even dabble in the lighter amenities of life. Narrowness in the sense that his interests are necessarily few in number is no essential characteristic of the fanatic. Wherein he differs from the ordinary man is in the manner in which he pursues his objects, and in the rigidity with which he forces his random interests into his scheme of values. He will not forget for an instant, whatever activity he may be engaged in,

¹The writer would like to acknowledge his debt to M. C. Otto's article on "Fanaticism", in the *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES*, for some hints which he has sought to develop in this paper.

that things are only important in so far as they further his end. His vigilance never relents. It springs from a deeply organic attitude. Noble buildings, paintings, the triumphs of science and engineering do not heighten his sense of human pride, for they belong to "the enemy". And over all the enemy's possessions falls a hateful shadow, unnoticeable to the ordinary man, but which the fanatic discerns as clearly as he does the object over which it is cast.

The fanatic is the victim of an overwhelming arrogance which expresses itself partly in the assumption that only those who agree with him can be in possession of the truth. His opponents, he seems to hold, are not merely wrong. Wrong may be "the backward" ones who have not heard the word. Those who have heard it but have refused to hearken unto it are more than wrong: they are insincere scoundrels obdurately defending a condition of affairs which no one but an utterly depraved man could have the cynicism to defend.

Ruthlessness is another of the most obvious marks of the fanatic. Ruthlessness is not given to him alone. Men are often cruel and pitiless without being fanatical. What distinguishes the fanatic's ruthlessness is his own attitude towards it. Other men will usually deny they are cruel or if convicted of it, will try to excuse themselves apologetically. The fanatic boasts of his ruthlessness and justifies it on moral grounds, accusing of weakness those who are incapable of using his own methods. His justification is always fairly simple and deduced without error from his premises. His ruthlessness is a duty imposed on him by conditions he did not create, which he usually claims to be the first to deplore. It is a scalpel with which he cuts gangrenous tissue. It would be unmentionable idiocy to allow the health of the body to be endangered by sentimental considerations for the germs which are destroying it. Though not always explicit, the assumption is always the same—the fanatic's way is the only way; he is the only right one in a universe populated by fools and hypocrites.

Since the fanatic holds his doctrines as matters of truth and not of opinion, one finds him placing a greater trust in logic than the ordinary man. The latter is always a little humble about his beliefs. He may push his argument as far as he can, and may stick

by his convictions dogmatically, but in his more dispassionate moments he sees clearly that logical demonstrations cannot carry him to practical extremes. He knows logic may fail him. Half-consciously he feels that logic, while perhaps the best tool to rely on, is not altogether to be trusted blindly. The fanatic, on the contrary, acts on logic, and is usually much more capable of giving a plausible account of his actions than any one else. Nor are we convinced by his account. For we are too well aware of the difficulties which he so easily resolves, too sensitive to the half-alternatives which constantly present themselves to men as possible solutions, to trust his black-and-white pictures and his simple either-or predictions.

Since his beliefs are for him a matter of truth, we find him characterizing them with the most eulogistic name available at the time. Once his doctrines were matters of "revelation"; later they were called matters of "philosophic certainty"; now "scientific" validity is claimed for them.

Trust in the results of his "science" is one of the reasons why orthodoxy is of such concern to him, even when it can in no way affect practical action. And it is also the reason why theoreticians usually occupy a high place in his hierarchy. In some cases the worship of theory is carried to such a point that to say of a man that he is merely "pragmatic" is considered by the fanatic as derogatory as to say of him that he is endowed with "coarseness of psychological make-up".

It is no wonder that the fanatic's logic is usually keen, and that his conclusions follow inevitably from his premises. Certain types of diseased minds are known to psychiatrists for the clarity of their logical processes. No sane man can argue as well as the paranoiac. But on the other hand the ordinary man will reason from different premises, will not stick by them with the same obstinacy, and if ordinarily wise, will show a diffidence before human perplexity, a sensitivity to subtle shades, that will allow him to be sympathetic in attitude and plastic in practice. The fanatic's thought pours out of a molten furnace, redwhite and vaporous, bubbling with the simmerings of intense emotional bitterness. In great fanatics reason and passion are keyed up to unusually taut

itches and logic chopping is mixed with a gargantuan power of invective.

The scientist does not know of a single "method". He does not even know of the five methods of John Stuart Mill. General and very abstract principles do guide him in his research. But in practice he is usually governed by hunches, by habits of mind, and by very loosely formulated principles of laboratory technique. Indeed, in the concrete, each problem requires its own method. He seldom studies methodology; that he leaves to the philosopher to amuse himself with. In his investigations he relies chiefly on his own insistent curiosity, on happy guesses and on unexpected confirmations. Unexpected, because his attitude is one of inquiry, not of *a priori* certitude. He questions, he does not affirm; doubts, does not believe. And he is aware above all of the vast oceans of ignorance which beat incessantly upon the soft and narrow strip of land he calls his findings. The fanatic is just the opposite. He possesses "a method". It would be more exact to say "a method" possesses him, as possesses him also a fundamental "truth". His intuitions and revelations may need to be elaborated, but he already has the essential insight. The fanatic usually follows some authority or book. A hero in the past grasped the truth, a more recent one made the necessary exegesis and perhaps realized it in action, and all that remains to be done now is to apply it to whatever situation arises, or complete the investigation of minor details.

The driving force of the fanatic is an inordinately strong will to power, which translates itself practically into a relentless drive to impose on others his own insights. It would be difficult to say with any degree of certainty whether the will to power is the result of the conviction with which he holds his faith, or whether the conviction is the product of the will to power. Perhaps both are results not only of social conditioning, but of a peculiar and possibly a seriously damaged physiological makeup. Several minor fanatics the writer has studied at first hand were not healthy individuals before conversion; and long before they discovered their causes they showed incipient tendencies to enthusiastic exclusiveness, capacity for abnormal hatred, and blind loyalty in trivial matters, which conversion seems merely to have intensified.

The fanatic enjoys no absolute monopoly on the will to power. In varying degrees it is a trait of all animals, and is probably the psychological expression of processes of predation and prehension which are conditions of all living things. But in the fanatic we find his will usually in opposition to the will of the society in which he lives. It works against the established order of things, not with it. It seeks for leadership and dominion in manners not generally approved. And part of the satisfaction it enjoys consists in facing the disapproval of the established order. Leadership in opposition, practical and ideological ruthlessness, extreme demands on himself and on others, give the fanatic a sense of dominion. And for the same reasons what he seeks is a personally carved, not an inherited or accidentally acquired, distinction.

The fanatic often possesses a deep sense of sin which of course implies a profound sense of divine perfection. Or perhaps a deeply outraged sense of human justice, which implies a heightened sense of human dignity. The fanatic is in any case an individual endowed with hyper-sensibility, and often with mental qualities of a high order. A man of ordinary sensibility does not usually look upon sin or injustice in the same intense manner. And his concerns are more diversified. His conscience deploys itself on a more superficial plane, attending to evils and sufferings that are not truly radical. This is another way of saying that the ordinary individual is sentimental, and does not peer into the full depth of the evil of the world, while the higher sensibility of the fanatic does not allow him to peer into anything else. The rigid organization of his impulses forces him to focus his attention intensely upon injustice or sin, but since it is impossible to look upon evil without some mitigation, he interposes a dream, a utopia, between himself and the object on which his eyes are riveted. And now that there is certainty that the evil can be done away with, will be done away with, it may be looked upon. Indeed, it may even be exaggerated, the certain future triumph of our efforts thus magnifying our personal worth. The reforming fanatic is usually an adventist. The advent will be preceded by a catastrophe, but after the catastrophe the concretion of the dream is deemed inevitable. And therefore the advent is usually imputed to transcendental powers or to an immanent development in human events. The

advent, entrusted to forces greater than oneself, is inevitable. And at the end, shining sweetly, waits sweet rest.

To reach the end we must go through darkness and fire and suffer ourselves to be used to that end. The sense of selfhood is thus lost through a process of objectification. Concentration on an outward and future goal does away entirely with introspective tendencies. "The cause" absorbs all efforts. "The cause" is the cause of individuals, but not necessarily of any one now living, since the greatest good, though distant, must be supreme. Meanwhile the destruction may be our own personal end, but in the service of the cause there is salvation. Sincerity guarantees it. And orthodoxy and willingness to sacrifice ourselves—and to sacrifice others too, of course—guarantee our sincerity.

Concentration on outward ends does not mean true selflessness. It merely means that the fanatic has learned to hide from himself his main motives, and has found forms for expressing objectively some of his most basic urges. The self remains reasserting its claims with concentrated force; but it now does so behind the mask of objective altruism. The achievement of objective ends is a means of self-gratification; but the ends are less desired for their own sake. Personal and larger goals are fused; the success of the group or party is the fanatic's own personal success. And the discovery of a nobler goal, which goes beyond individual petty gratification, exalts the self. The identification of larger with smaller ends takes place in what Germans would call two "moments". First we find the fanatic's personal success identified with that of the party or group; and second the identification of the group's ends with those of humanity.

The fact that through identification with larger ends the self finds more room for growth accounts at least in part for the fanatic's missionary zeal. The more of life one brings under one's own dominion the larger one's egregious self looms. It also accounts for the importance attached to right doctrine within the organization. A difference of opinion shrinks the field within which the self may expand, it diminishes the realm of its dominion. Autonomy in small areas means the whittling off of his self, and the fanatic cannot allow his self to contract. On the other hand, there are men in the organization who push for autonomy, for they resent

being rammed into alien moulds by more powerful wills. This is why heresy is endemic in fanatical movements and why it is fought with such relentless bitterness.

The fanatic justifies the demands he makes on others and the sacrifices he gladly makes himself by pointing to the ultimate happiness they will bring. But this must not be taken to imply that his real end is human happiness, however emphatic he may be in his asseverations to himself and to others that this is the case. For he is in this respect a victim of what Vaihinger called rather pompously the "Law of the Preponderance of Means over the End", which he explained as the tendency means have of always turning into ends and of acquiring therefore a degree of importance higher than the original end. The fanatic no doubt was originally motivated by a desire for justice or for virtue. To achieve these ends he became convinced there was only one way. And now the means have become an all ruling end, to which the original end is sacrificed. The original end is still honored, but only verbally; and celebrated, but no longer pursued. The real end is now whatever was devised as means. And this is one of the reasons why those who advocate other means to the same end are dealt with as the most dangerous enemies.

Means become ends for him with such ease because they are important in the essentially practical work in which he is engaged, and because he usually has to create them without precedent. But also because by forcing others to accept instrumentalities of his own devising, he can exercise his will to power. If any means whatsoever are adequate to an end, each man may choose his own rather than accept another's. But this makes for individual autonomy and balks the fanatic's craving for dominion. While, of course, if only means of his own devising may be accepted, only he may interpret them, and only under his direction may they be carried out. The fanatic's ultimate aim is to bring humanity under his sway. For its own good, of course. But this large amorphous group is to be clearly distinguished from the Saints, and is not to be consulted as to whether it wishes to be saved or not, since it does not know what it should want. Its ends, arrived at naively without the aid of right doctrine, its "elemental movements", are always unworthy. The amorphous and uninstructed mass makes

for a middling end, desires middling comfort, middling happiness, not a complete self-realization, such as the fanatic dreams of. The desiderata of *l'homme moyen* are unworthy of man, and the worst enemy the fanatic has to contend with is therefore humanity's natural drive. Heaven is not worth the effort to get there; purgatory is good enough for most of us. What then is to be done?

The answer has been given us several times in history, nor is it a specially modern discovery. The primary need is for an organization of absolutely loyal and utterly obedient missionaries who will lead the flock to the really desirable ends. Half-measures, compromises, the give and take of human beings in the market place, are to be eschewed. The flock will want happiness here and now, will be satisfied with melioration. But this is not to be permitted. It is therefore necessary to smash those movements through which the flock, misguided by leaders who see no further than themselves, seeks to achieve its own ends. Does the flock want comfort, peace, satisfaction? Real comfort and peace cannot be found unless through the fanatic's way, after going through darkness and fire.

It is well known that the fanatic usually brings upon himself persecution and calls forth ruthless opposition from the established order. But it is not usually admitted that the established order first impresses upon the fanatic unwittingly the form of his activity and encourages him in his extremity because it is so ready to defend itself ruthlessly from all change. Hence the radical and hopeless nature of human struggles, the horrible extremes to which men constantly fly, the cruelty they use against one another. The indifference of those in power, the outrageous blindness with which the established order of things tramples on human dignity, furnish the fanatic with adequate verification of his insights, and give him converts without much difficulty. Organized, he demands all or nothing, and fights as bitterly as he is fought. Reasonableness is submerged, extreme characters assume leadership on both sides, and a struggle goes on, propagating more ruthlessness, which calls for still more. But persecution, obstacles, opposing ruthlessness, these do no more than increase the energy and the power of the fanatic. Opposition calls forth from him not only greater display of energy but exaltation. The greatness of the task now appears

truly worthy of his own efforts. His self, seemingly submerged in the cause which he serves, but making its own demands effective nevertheless, expands and grows under the adverse conditions.

In the core of the whirling wheel of fire the fanatic is able to find some sort of peace. And he finds it because it is only within the whirling fire that his needs, his deeper drives, his unslakable cravings, find satisfaction. But his is a specious peace. For the peace is on the basis of bitterness. And the capacity to hate is increased through it. Calvin thanked God for the bungling of the executioner, which prolonged the sufferings of the victims which he, Calvin, had condemned, for God's greater glory. But such satisfaction is not really peace. It is torture. It violates a part of man's nature, which no man can ever altogether suppress. But what is worse, cruelty feeds that hanker which it is brought forth to slake.

by L. Robert Lind

THE PYRAMIDS

Slaves lifted here a challenge to the sun,
And threatened the lonely splendor of the sky
With courage born of whips; when they were done,
The pyramids stared at the sun's hot eye.
Four thousand years but as a single day
Merged into night, took slave and king, while these
Great households of the dust, four-square and grey,
Watched over Egypt's old iniquities.

Cheops and Chephren have what they desired:
The changeless home of rulers; they are dead.
Only the desert wind, sultry and tired,
Troubles the Nile whence every god has fled,
And hears, down that proud sandy way of doom,
The voice of man still speaking from the tomb.

by Wilson O. Clough

IRONY: A FRENCH APPROACH

NO one who rereads George Meredith's famous essay on the Comic Spirit can escape the impression of something Gallic about that hovering imp of laughter that prods and teases men into being more civilized. Behind it is not only British humor from Chaucer to Dickens, but also an ironic clarity that comes in part, like Restoration drama, from across the channel. Meredith touched but briefly upon irony in his essay, it is true, labelling it the "humor of satire"; but the ironic note is there. It was left, however, to a modern French philosopher to assign to Irony the stellar role, to make of it the ultimate expression of conscious intelligence at work upon itself and its world. Not that Vladimir Jankélévitch mentions Meredith in his *L'Ironie*.¹ Perhaps he never even heard of him. Nevertheless, a certain initial parallel is pardonable. Though Irony is first of all for the Frenchman conscious intelligence, supreme clarity, it is in the end, like the Comic Spirit, a refining and reforming force, even a "well of seriousness", collaborating with simplicity and even sympathy in the endless labor of civilising wayward man.

Indeed, it is this ultimate ethical aspect of Irony which throws difficulties in the way of adequate translation of *L'Ironie*. For *L'Ironie* was preceded by a book entitled *La Mauvaise Conscience*. Now the French word *conscience*, like so many French words that look easy to the careless reader, is far from easy. *Conscience* is commonly employed in French philosophy to mean perception, understanding, discernment, awareness, and especially consciousness or conscious state. F. L. Pogson, who collaborated with Bergson in translating him into English, used consciousness

¹*L'Ironie* (Alcan, Paris, 1936). Jankélévitch is *Maitre de Conférences* at the University of Lille. Besides studies of Bergson and Schelling, he has also published *La Mauvaise Conscience* (1935) and *L'Alternative* (1937). The present essay, in slightly changed form, is intended as a Preface to a translation of *L'Ironie*. Quotations are from this translation.

or conscious state throughout his work for the original *conscience*. And yet the fact that the same word, especially as *conscience morale* may mean also our English "conscience" enables Jankélévitch to build a whole book and the opening chapter in *L'Ironie* upon an equivocal term scarcely translatable into a single English word. Even to call it "moral perception" or "moral consciousness" will hardly do, since these phrases are less objective, more moralistic, than the original intention. For central to Jankélévitch is a preference for an intellectualistic and ironic ethic, opposed to the conventional social and institutional loyalties that customarily pass for morality. Conscience, in short, as befits its etymology, should pass from habit and the unconscious to intellect and the highly conscious. In the achievement of this transformation Irony plays a major role.

Thus when *La Mauvaise Conscience* opens with "*La conscience n'est autre chose que l'esprit*", it would be absurd, especially in this context, to read, "conscience is nothing other than spirit". Yet to say, "Consciousness is nothing other than mind" would be to lose the wholly intentional play on this critical word. For, as Jankélévitch put it in a personal letter, he deliberately courted this confusion in order to consider these very "*situations mentales*".

Consciousness, then, whether intellectual or ethical, is a form of mind or intellect. A moment of such consciousness is not a separate act, but a function of the whole person, an act of clear-sightedness and freedom. Yet its appearance engenders unrest, since reflection is "not to confirm evidences but to challenge them". Radical doubt is a critical form of "an attack of consciousness", as it was with Descartes. Science is the consciousness of phenomena, philosophy that of the sciences, and morality the consciousness of consciousness. Moral consciousness is thus finally indistinguishable from intellectual consciousness.

But consciousness cannot in itself be bad, an evil. For it gives us pause for judgment, it enables us to stand off and view phenomena, to view even the self as object. It brings us the gift of leisure, of free and disinterested contemplation. It is detached, even happy, in its activity. There is, however, an unhappy consciousness, also critical, but unhappy because unable to maintain its distance from its object, especially when that object is the Self.

The consequent loss of objective lucidity is a "missfire" of true consciousness, a form of self-accusation and a denial of the joy of living. Is this unhappy consciousness a virtue? Not so. Even at best, its function is cure, the return to true virtue, namely the healthy consciousness. For while remorse invents empty compartments labelled "satisfaction in duty done" and the like, the nascent "good" consciousness becomes instead the source of the most profound joys of being alive.

We are now prepared to understand Jankélévitch's initial approach to irony as another and higher form of *conscience* or consciousness. It, too, is objective, contemplative, apart from its object, though still distinct from certain other aspects of consciousness. It is too ethical to be esthetic, too ruthless to be Comic Spirit, yet it shares with these activities the "relaxing of vital urgency". Irony plays with danger, tempting it, being diverted by it, renewing the game on all occasions, running the risks of detachment. It is consciousness in contemplation of its own predicaments.

In the history of thought we may observe, says Jankélévitch, certain oases of irony, periods when irony resisted the too compact human systems. The first of these appeared with Socrates, who lost his life in the game. His was a questioning irony, disintegrating whole cosmologies, puncturing "goatskin bottles of eloquence". His was the first irony of an adolescent humanity, the consciousness of the Athenians, both "good" and "bad"; and "thereafter in Greece there is room for quick and subtle thought and for fruitful criticism." But there is also discomfort, "aporia", the characteristic suspended judgment and uneasiness of contradictions, "the teasing desire to know and define oneself." Socrates was the ancestor of a whole host of philosophic protestors, for after him men can no longer rest easily in blissful unconsciousness. "The death of Socrates," says Jankélévitch in an eloquent passage, "has thus become a normative fact, like the battle of Marathon, an exalted symbol, exercising the old Asiatic destinies of consciousness."

Historically, irony has taken many forms: the ironic "wit" of the eighteenth century, for example, or the romantic irony of the nineteenth, uncritical, lyric, free to the point of license. But

throughout we may observe certain aspects of irony, irony on phenomena and irony on self. Unreverently, irony examines things and ideas, pushing them to the intellectual horizon, shedding, at least for the moment, the mantle of necessity. Thus the object takes its place among other objects, such as serve to define it. It shrinks in space and in time, placed by consciousness in its perspective, shorn of its importance to the centripetal Self.

Irony on Self is vastly more complex, more difficult. For Self, body, instinct, have ways of making ridiculous all our fine poses of disinterestedness. How, then, shall we learn to view consciousness itself objectively? Here Jankélévitch makes use of two terms, Economy and Diplomacy. The first refers to the means employed to make our inner tragedy normal. Reconstructing the chain of causes for past events, we dissipate their prestige, and reduce the present to its place in the succession of things. Knowledge serves to strip our feelings, hates, emotions, enthusiasms of their pretentiousness. For the too-serious souls, criticism of sources and resources into origins is salutary, as well as an admirable lesson in humility and caution. It is for this reason that all dogmatisms forbid indiscreet speculation as to genealogy, hugging the illusion that they must be non-generic, that they never "became". But in vain. Sooner or later comes irony with its *economy* of history and cause and effect.

What is liberty, then, but the consciousness of necessity? For necessity joins issue irreverently with the too sacred, the eccentric, and derides all too-solemn visages. Physiology, biology, sociology, are they not all leagued against our cant and our fine phrases? Ideas are at the mercy of the body; they are betrayed by instinct, the unconscious wish, the barbarian in us; or they are seen to be wholesale social plagiarism. Feelings become ephemeral, beliefs unstable, passions fickle; and only humor will enable us to face this "deceptive absolute", once we become conscious. Consciousness warned by irony will not be so easily duped a second time.

Diplomacy, as it concerns irony, is the art of wending one's way between the many conflicting, possible points of view. By it we escape the unilateral blindness of the too-serious, we recover impartiality and reasonableness. Here again Jankélévitch comments on those obsessed souls who wish to appear complete in a single

experience, a single idea. They are infinitely vulnerable, infinitely fragile and unhappy, for they have multiplied greatly the possibilities of deception. There is something exhausting about this "frenetic and painful tension" of the too-serious. Irony would free them from this assumption of the tragic air at every turn of events. Your ironist learns to "glide over" much of life's emotional tragedies. His motto is "something of each", rather than "all of one". He is thus opposed to fanaticism, inflexibility, distortion, intolerance, cant. By his incredulity he abashes bathos and cant. For irony is wisdom and freedom. But alas, irony can also be a melancholy gaiety, disturbed and humiliated by this discovery of plurality; for the vast not-me is a chilling thought, and justice is colder than feeling. "How hard to be at once reasonable and ardent."

II

Jankélévitch next considers the "faces" of irony, all summed up in "simulation", that which distinguishes it from too-serious reflection. Irony is first a form of allegory, thinking one thing and saying another. Here language enters to complicate the matter, for the word can be but an approximation of the idea. Language resembles a free translation, offering the general sense, and acting both as obstacle and organ. But understanding surrounds language with waves of connotation, and supplies, corrects, and gathers meanings. The function of Irony is to pierce these ambiguities, to track consciousness through its labyrinths, and to free it from premature assumptions.

Irony bears some resemblance to hypocrisy, but it is an "inverted hypocrisy", unlike *real* hypocrisy in that this latter is egoistic and incapable of objectivity or generalization. Hypocrisy aims to deceive outright, irony to deceive only to gain understanding. Irony denies to affirm, imitates error to tempt it to destruction. It is the good man assuming the airs of a bad, for a purpose. In place of the terrible "sincerity" of reflex action, it prefers the pause of intelligence. Belief is "sincere" because it is like reflex action. Our first impulse is to believe, our second to consider. The unhappy consciousness, which may include "belief", is static, unable to unmake, but irony makes and unmakes. Irony is an acrobat,

like the daring young man on the flying trapeze, aware of both sides, pretending the unhappy consciousness of a soldier playing 'possum in order to lead the enemy on, invading his camp to ape his follies and to escape from them. There is, too, an *educative* irony; we may not, as our author puts it, make egoism disinterested, but we may "interest it in disinterestedness".

Irony is, again, confused with cynicism. But cynicism is often violently and desperately moralist, staking everything on the claim to be the worst. The cynic is relatively serious (though a pure cynicism is impossible), tempting scandal in the hope that it will cancel itself—as atheism, according to Pascal, is nearer faith than indifference. Irony resembles cynicism in trying to force evil into the open, to be what it is instead of parodying good. But irony goes around the obstacle, courting fewer risks than cynicism.

Similar to cynicism, too, is "ironic conformity", this time a positive rôle for irony. But again irony takes the mean, not the extreme. While the cynic burns his bridges, the ironist plays a game. The cynic is fool or sufferer, the unhappy consciousness. The ironist is pretender, outwardly conforming with evil to ridicule it, like Socrates proposing to be honored in the Prytaneum. "One should be conformist in little things, insurgent in the great," says the ironist, thus separating himself from the true conformist. "True revolution is not in violence of detail nor excess of language or clothing, but in the profound conversion of a will refusing the traditional order." There the romantic rebel failed; Schlegel, for example, rebelling and ending in philistine conversion. What irony really wants is to bring masked scandal into the open, to make the unconscious conscious of itself and its world. If all men were wholly themselves, there would be no need of irony; but consciousness persists in playing rôles. Therefore irony circulates about, playing the rôle of rôles, outwitting the hypocrite at his own game, because it is free, while hypocrisy is embarrassed by its dishonesty. Irony "wants all to be sharp, distinct, and unequivocal", and is forever critical of the lies of self and society.

Irony, once more, may be labelled a form of "litotes", affirmation by negation. It makes use of reticence and allusion, assumes modesty and discontinuity, in order to ridicule cant and pedantry. Irony prefers to suggest, and dislikes redundancy and pleonasm.

There is even ironic silence, the silence of Socrates before his accusers. Brevity is its mode of speech, for it knows that to say all is impossible. It is falsely modest, falsely naïve, pretending forgetfulness so as not to forget, penetrating farther by its circuitous ways than others by words, subdividing the too-serious continuity, dissociating, breaking up unconscious routines, discouraging solemn prolixity.

III

No one can have read thus far without observing that irony courts risks, both for Self and for its victims. Its methods, its stratagems, are hazardous, skirting on the one side the scorn of hypocrites, on the other its own self-deception. Two reproaches in particular may be directed at irony. First, it engenders confusion. Its humor appears capricious, cold, even melancholy; its agility and wit make for complexity. It plays with fire, and may even trick itself. It may ridicule reason until it itself becomes naïve; it may mock naïveté until it becomes itself passionless. It may be entrapped in its own language, for, essaying to be sincere, it may seem figurative only. It may put too much faith in its indifference, to find itself involved more deeply than before. Confusion may end in vertigo, and the "tension of character" may be weakened into a "complaisant nullity", personality blotted out by freedom, or boredom following on liberty, the causeless "spleen" of the romantics. There is also a second danger, that to the object. Things become futile, meaningless. Irony turns into distrust of the real, becomes inhuman in its detachment, refuses to risk action, and is condemned to sterility. For action is choice, and choice is preference. Thus irony, being relative and negative, more tolerant than generous, may reduce all to probabilism and atomism. It has become a master of phantoms and subtleties only; and its lucidity is now but "intellectual nomadism".

These are grave charges to direct at irony. Are they justified? Jankélévitch concludes still in defense of irony. If irony depreciates particulars, it is but the more to honor the whole. Irony does not destroy things, finally, but envisages them instead under a certain aspect of generality. It is its characteristic to affirm the positiveness yet imperfection of all things; but this is because it

sees the part as contingent and the whole as the important. Individuals pass and institutions remain, the work outlasts the worker. Thus irony concerns itself with the detail that it might restore the whole "by an instantaneous magic and evocation of allusive powers of intuition." Irony, aware of a host of delicate nuances, is more than narrow mockery, "for the latter is mirth by the letter, the former mirth of the mind."

Still more important is the rôle of irony in our internal improvement. "There are after all so few important things. The comic worthlessness of human occupation cheers us, and, from the outset, we erase from the chart of our anxieties all those minute worries which so agitate the vacant hours of the provincially minded, and whose importance barely stretches beyond the afternoon. Irony, hastening to the essential, subordinates all these microscopic tragedies, and thus relaxes tension, ventilates and simplifies."

Irony underlines the unimportance of much that it may enforce the importance of more. It deflates false sublimities, exaggerations and obsessive feelings. It is the regulator; it "immunizes us against deception. It is the antidote for false tragedies, the consciousness that no value exhausts all values." Its virtues are patience and good humor and modesty. It is sensitive, not over-sure; it bides its time. It demands resignation oftener than enthusiasm; it has a horror of headlong familiarities and too sudden acceptances. Like modesty, like life, it will not be hurried, for it knows that the most easily transported are the most fickle. Like modesty again, it is "the president of a spiritual dignity befitting the things of the soul." For there is no absolute irony. Corrosive as vitriol, yes, but also a "well of seriousness"—not the seriousness of the unconscious, but that of an ever alert and wakeful intelligence. Like the act of doubting in Descartes, it begins an intellectual operation leading toward something.

Thus, in the end, irony comes to show a certain likeness to Humor, the sympathetic "smile of reason", ironising even on irony. For humor, too, has a basis in skepticism. Jankélévitch quotes Bergson to the effect that "irony expresses the ought-to-be by pretending to take it for the real, while humor describes the real while affecting to take it for the ideal." Irony is an intellectual calling. Its aim is neither self-contemplation nor some more trans-

cedental goal—unless it be transcendental to affirm the fundamental truth and good of mind. It is always "on the way", never to be classified with finality; a paradox, like the French mind, reconciling Voltaire and Rousseau, Descartes and Pascal, Ingres and Delacroix; like Paris, city of fashion and movement, most ironic, most sentimental of cities, constantly new, constantly out of date, "wit and love united in the free fullness of mind and spirit."

Actually, then, irony is no enemy of the true, but only of all half-way stations to the true. Wisdom begins only when the mind is purged of the limited and false; but something is saved. Irony is mobility of consciousness, "intelligence forever recalling its own creations in order to keep its energies and to remain master of codes and rules, of cultures and ceremonies." It is not inimical to reverence and love, but wishes to refine and especially to intellectualize them, to pass them from body to mind, "from ecclesiastical mythology to the moral person"; from, to quote Brunschvig, "the respected to the respectable". As Descartes must blaspheme against Aristotle to establish a celestial mechanics, as anatomy was forced to deny the old reverence for the dead, so irony risks sacrilege to "render reverence purer and more intelligent".

At the last, then, Jankélévitch concludes on a note of paradox and reconciliation. Wisdom will not finally discard synthesis for analysis. Irony, enemy of illusion, will not destroy simplicity. Sentimentality, purged by irony, will find a central region beyond mockery, for sympathy is as permanent as lucidity. Wit and love, this is the final duality; and if wit is nimbler, love is stronger. Each is infinite, intelligence and simplicity, irony and love. Irony is not without its joy, and a lucid sanity will not fail those who live with sympathy and simplicity.

by L. Robert Lind

THE CRISIS IN LITERATURE

II—PROPAGANDA AND LETTERS

THE history of propaganda has not yet been written. Its very nature and definition may still be regarded as matters of some uncertainty; the fact that most of those who have written with any authority upon the subject, with the exception of a few scholars, have been journalists, advertising men, or public relations officers for large firms may indicate the difficulty of arriving at a just estimate of its extremely subtle and momentous function in modern life.

Conceivably a history of propaganda on a dignified scale might begin with classical antiquity. The first division of European literature in point of time is the Greek. Waiving for the moment any attempt at definition, it is obvious to the impartial observer that Greek literature is shot through with several varieties of propaganda—political, religious, humanitarian, military. Plato's *Republic*, which recommends itself to many readers today for the most lofty reasons, is rarely considered as what, rightly regarded, it certainly is: a vast, complex, and richly subtle piece of propaganda. In a sense, all literature and oratory, all education or public speech, can be looked upon as propaganda, as the attempt to influence thinking and action toward certain ends. Plato is an arch-conspirator against human stupidity; his gifts are many and his resources of style and thought are cause for continual wonder. Yet if they are employed with a sometimes irritating cleverness toward the realization of a noble aim, the result is, nevertheless, propaganda. For the *Republic* is a great scheme whose aim is to direct judiciously the minds of men so that every unit of Plato's ideal society might absorb the exactly right doctrine from Plato's

point of view,¹ and be driven to accept his conclusions willy-nilly. Education in the knowledge of virtue is Plato's purpose, and the efficacy of his persuasion is measured only by the effect which the *Republic* has exerted upon subsequent ages.

The war-songs of Tyrtæus, Callinus, and Solon, the political speeches of Demosthenes, the Pan-Hellenic gospel of Isocrates, are all in a sense propaganda as much as the exhortations of any passionately convinced and convincing speaker. If Homer does not speak *propria persona*, at least it is almost exclusively the kings and princes and their class-views who are set forth in his poems. Aristophanes and Euripides, in their different ways and with their sophisticated and worldly attitudes, are both artists of the highest order; their work cannot, nevertheless, be divorced from the purpose which informs them. This is not merely entertainment: for Aristophanes, peace-propaganda is a guiding motive in several plays and comedy chiefly the vehicle of a message. The humanitarian zeal of Euripides is obvious; it may have been the chief reason why he was, to many in his own age as well as to Professor Jowett in the nineteenth century, an abomination under heaven. To pursue the matter further is needless: these, with the religious pamphleteering of Sallustius, the definite dogmatism of many philosophers, the deliberate archaicizing of many poets, the sedulous propagation of the Spartan government as a social ideal² both at Athens and elsewhere, are additional instances.

Roman propaganda is limited in large part to the literature of the Empire. The quiet Vergil, most characteristic poet of the age, has left clear traces in his poems of obedience to the wishes of his imperial master, Augustus; the *Aeneid* is in essence as elevated and splendid a piece of propaganda as one could desire, hymning the glories of Rome through the old story of Aeneas. Horace, Ovid, and Martial have touches of propaganda in their conventional adulation toward their patrons. No writer, indeed, from classical antiquity to the nineteenth century could wholly escape the compulsion of propagandizing in some way or other if he wished to retain the support of wealthy patrons. Though this

¹Compare the wool-dyer's simile in regard to inculcating courage into the warrior class, paragraphs 429, 430.

²Cf. *Le Mirage Spartiate*, F. Ollier; Lyons, 1935.

usually took the form of fulsome dedicatory epistles or poems, it entailed the abstention from criticism of the class of society to which the patron belonged. Catullus reviles Caesar, but only before Caesar becomes his friend. The "De Bello Civile" of Lucan is openly a propaganda epic in favor of a political faction. Sallust, too, writes without concealment in partiality for a certain class of society.

The falsifications and forgery of donations and charters by which writers sought to bolster up the power of the Medieval Church, much theoretical and political writing of the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance, such as Machiavelli's *Prince*, Campanella's *City of the Sun*, Dante's *De Monarchia* can all be considered on valid grounds as propaganda to more or less degree. The orthodox historians of the Inquisition, Martin Luther and John Calvin, and many another religious leader have all been vigorous propagandists.

When education becomes strongly moralistic, it becomes propaganda, as it has always been with religious education; consider the Jesuits. Education chiefly for aesthetic development rarely becomes successful propaganda or turns itself as well to the schemes of spiritual coercion which abound in all religious literature, from the decrees of the first church council to the *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas and the latest encyclical of the latest pope. Such educational propaganda, it may be further observed, in contradistinction to the subjectivity of purely aesthetic training, tends to cloak itself under the semblance of objective values, and ostensibly to derive its strength from standards of expedience and profit disguised by resounding terms and slogans; it seeks to make its injunctions referable to (or based upon) certain high moral principles by the lofty catch-word "make the world safe for democracy" which history has shown to be practically equivalent to "make exploitation safe and honorable for profiteers and munitions-manufacturers".

It is apparent that the term "propaganda" lends itself easily to a multitude of interpretations determined by the purpose of those who wish to make use of it. Propaganda means one thing to Mr. Hearst and Lord Rothermere; it means something a bit different to Stalin, Hitler, and Mussolini, although all five could reach an agreement as to its meaning more quickly than could Norman

Thomas, Walter Lippmann, and John Dewey. The element of expediency would outweigh for the former five all the ethical and metaphysical implications which, to the latter three, the term would give reason for pause and reflection. The perplexing contradictions to which the word gives rise are exemplified by numerous and well-known illustrations: as, for instance, while the hirelings of Mr. Hearst send up a continual and dutifully raucous howl about Communist propaganda, they themselves carry on a ceaseless and incredibly vicious propaganda campaign of their own, in order to poison in the minds of simple Americans the last vestiges of reason and discrimination.

Remy de Gourmont has written a classic essay¹⁸ on a subject very similar to the present one; for propaganda falls into a category with such invidious and two-edged words as "patriotism", "liberty", "justice", "truth", "glory", beneath whose husks and vestments of superstition and prejudice the French essayist has tried to penetrate. When the hoary accretions of personal animus and private purpose have been stripped from them, they stand revealed as far less fearsome and ambiguous; their interpretation becomes clear in the light of sociological and psychological inquiry. Sir Thomas Browne, Charles Lamb, and Jeremy Bentham have likewise labored at this rather thankless task; every good philosopher has proceeded on similar lines before he could build any theory of knowledge, being, or value in the cleared wilderness of human misuse of language.¹⁹

II

Given this situation, it is difficult to know exactly how to continue in any analysis of the term "propaganda" or its complex connotations. As it stands, the word constitutes a problem in the psychology of communication; for while to many it will provoke an instant response and mental imagery of a most unfavorable and hostile nature, yet this state of response will not serve either for adequate philosophic description or definition. Two facts, moreover, are to be kept in mind in this discussion: first, the term is recent in

¹⁸"La Dissociation des Idées", in *LA CULTURE DES IDEES* (new ed. 1910).

¹⁹"PSEUDODOXA EPIDEMICA, Sir Thomas Browne; POPULAR FALLACIES, Charles Lamb; BOOK OF FALLACIES, Jeremy Bentham. One might add certain headings in Mr. H. W. Fowler's excellent *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*.

general usage, and, second, the overwhelmingly preponderant set of connotations which the word recalls is connected with the World War. This may be observed by consulting the article on "Propaganda" in the fourteenth edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica: it is exclusively devoted to its use as an instrument of coercion during the War.

Naturally, war is not the only situation in which propaganda may arise, although it is certainly one of its most fertile fields. It is quite possible to associate the term with business, advertising, political or social philosophies, with art or with literature. It is necessary, however, in using it as a term of literary criticism, to divorce the word from its more unfortunate and customary relationships and to regard it without the invidious quality usually attached to it, as, in modern times, "oratory" or "elegance" or "refinement" have come to have an invidious flavor of association which these words did not originally possess.

Linguistically, the word derives from the Latin *propagare*, "to sow". That the term can still be discussed in terms of impartiality and careful analysis is shown by the following definition arrived at by a recent student of the subject:"

... a complete definition of propaganda:

Intentional propaganda is a systematic attempt by an individual (or individuals) to control the attitudes of groups of individuals through the use of suggestion and, consequently, to control their actions; unintentional propaganda is the control of the attitudes and, consequently, the actions of groups of individuals through the use of suggestion.

This definition is by no means a mere academic distinction evolved in a mood of despair; it is the reasoned conclusion of a scholar who has studied the question from a variety of points of view and with first-hand information gained by experiences as an investigator for the recent Senate Committee Investigating the Munitions Industry and by two years of residence in Hitler's Germany. This personal experience is reinforced by a good deal of patient research in many phases of the subject, leading to a practic-

¹PROPAGANDA: ITS PSYCHOLOGY AND TECHNIQUE, Leonard W. Doob; Henry Holt, New York (1935) 89.

able formulation of the psychological principles underlying propaganda as a social force.

His remarks on the specific question of propaganda in art are few but significant. It is unfortunate that his primary purpose did not embrace a more complete analysis of this phase of the subject, for it is obvious to those who read his book that he might throw much light upon the relation between propaganda and letters, left unanalyzed by most literary critics. I quote his opening paragraphs:¹¹

Coupling art and propaganda should cause no shudder. For no reflection is being cast upon art, or upon propaganda for that matter. Art may possess many other characteristics besides those which pertain to propaganda. It may be beautiful, expressive, communicative, comforting, or completely silent; qualities like these remain and are often long enduring, regardless of the social message which the creator also tries to convey. Even a very profound account of the genesis of art in terms of a particular social *milieu* does not alter any of the peculiarities which the art contains; such an account merely supplements man's understanding of the phenomenon and it cannot explain the art away. Propaganda, then, is but one of the many possible functions of painting, architecture, music, prose, or poetry.

The artist may be a true craftsman, and yet he may be spreading propaganda unintentionally. Propaganda certainly pervaded most of the masterpieces produced during the European Renaissance, although those masterpieces are considered now to be more important than and to have transcended their petty messages. Italian painters spread paint upon their canvases to sing the glory of the Catholic Church; and later, as the age decayed, some of them produced a likeness of their patrons in one of the corners of the painting. The more secular artists of the northern countries created portraits of the burghers to be hung in city halls. Siena began a mighty cathedral to show the Florentines that this Umbrian city had grown powerful. Even Chartres was a business enterprise through which the powerful guilds of that part of France sought special favors from the Virgin. Music too has been employed by royal patrons to boost their own prestige rather than the reputations of the geniuses whom they hired to do their composing.

¹¹*op. cit.* p. 384-385; see also p. 386.

Mr. T. S. Eliot has somewhat superficially and inadequately touched the matter in the course of criticizing a passage from A. N. Whitehead's *Science and the Modern World*.²¹ He makes reference, however, to a writer who has approached the subject with far more authority and completeness—Mr. Montgomery Beligion. In two books²² Mr. Beligion has, with much acuteness of perception, treated this significant relationship. The second of these books, *The Human Parrot and Other Essays*, develops more fully a theme originally sketched in the first. The essay in *The Human Parrot* entitled *The Irresponsible Propagandist* is his fullest expression to date on the relation of literature to purpose.

Mr. Beligion takes his point of departure from a statement of the French novelist, François Mauriac, in which the latter asserts that the novel, if it is carefully designed "to depict life exactly as it is", can carry its readers forward in their knowledge of mankind. In the succeeding argument Mr. Beligion shows that the common basis for the criticism of narratives, their "trueness to life", is a fallacy because it is as impossible either for the author to make a narrative absolutely true to life as it is for the reader to criticise it on this basis, since he cannot have an entirely complete knowledge of life even if he is a mature and experienced person of the sort Newman refers to in a famous passage of his *GRAMMAR OF ASSENT* on the power to affect the human heart which great masterpieces have.²³

The narrative (by this is meant novels, plays, or narrative poems) cannot be true to life, furthermore, for the reason that in it the writer invariably presents an argument in favor of a certain Weltanschauung; he presents a *theory of life* which is the result of conscious choice between motives, incidents, characters and their moral choices in turn. Actual life cannot serve as a model since its events are followed by other events unpredictable in their

²¹"POETRY AND PROPAGANDA"; *THE BOOKMAN* (since become *THE AMERICAN REVIEW*), February, 1930, pp. 595-602. See the reply to this article by Louis Grudin, *MR. ELIOT AMONG THE NIGHTINGALES*; Joiner and Steele, Ltd., London, 1932.

²²*OUR PRESENT PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE*; Faber and Faber, London, 1929; *THE HUMAN PARROT AND OTHER ESSAYS*; Oxford Un. Press, 1931.

²³*AN ESSAY IN AID OF A GRAMMAR OF ASSENT*, J. H. Newman; the Catholic Publication Society, New York (1870), p. 75.

nature or significance, a condition quite unfitted for the narrative, although it may to some extent be *based* on actual life.

Artistic necessity plus a theory of life determines the choice the author must make; examples are cited from Shelley, Stendhal, Balzac, the Greek dramatists, for this and other links in the chain of Mr. Belgion's reasoning. He concludes finally with this set of facts:²²

Three facts, then, (a) that every narrative is the illustration of a theory of life, (b) that every narrative is propaganda for its theory, and (c) that propaganda is irresponsible, form my second reason why the belief now prevalent about the revealing and instructive powers of novels, plays, and narrative poems is mistaken.

I come finally to why I have sought to expose the falsity of that belief. It seems to me, since, on the one hand, we tend so greatly at present to derive our views of how one should conduct one's life from the fiction we read and the plays we hear, and since, on the other hand, every narrative is the illustration of a theory of life, and not the transcript of a fragment of life as it is, that critics of novels and plays, and of narrative poems too, are entitled to dwell, not on the "intuitions" of character and the subtle observations of manners, which they find in a work they are examining, but on the nature of the theory of life which is being illustrated in that work.

It should be observed that nowhere in this essay does Mr. Belgion define exactly what he means by propaganda nor, sufficiently, explain why all such propaganda should be irresponsible and not thoroughly responsible, deliberately willed and reasoned out. The cause for this incompleteness is, probably, his exclusive concentration upon the critic's point of view in dwelling upon theories of life, indeed the necessity of doing so, rather than upon the naïve and spontaneous reactions of most readers of narrative. This part of his argument inclines too far toward pure chance, intuition, a fatalistic charm in a theory of life for the author of narrative, because the theory of life contains appealing narrative possibilities. Mr. Eliot,²³ realizing this, adjusts the balance somewhat in favor of conscious and rational planning by calling Lucretius, Dante,

²²THE HUMAN PARROT, etc., p. 94.

²³op. cit. p. 598.

and Milton responsible and deliberate propagandists, while seeking to reconcile Mr. Belgion's views—"neither fantastic nor easy to overthrow"—with a view of Mr. I. A. Richards, in the latter's *Practical Criticism*.

Nor does Mr. Belgion show why the theory of life the author always illustrates in his narrative should not be *instructive* in itself, as a theory of life which might affect and guide the reader in his own moral choices or, in turn, his individual theory of life. These are objections which the essayist has not included in the final page of his essay, where he takes up in rebuttal three arguments that might be pleaded against his results. The somewhat vague assertions of M. Mauriac (and even of Professor Whitehead) may, therefore, be not quite so ridiculous as Messieurs Belgion and Eliot claim they are.

But the net result of Mr. Belgion's analysis of narrative as embodying a theory of life has a close counterpart in the second portion of Mr. Doob's definition of propaganda, while Mr. Eliot's statement about Lucretius and Milton coincides with the first half of that definition. Neither critic would deny, I am sure, that any author with a theory of life is attempting, in spite of the hazards and uncertainties of execution which the intuitive nature of literary creation presents, to affect or "control the attitudes of groups" even if these groups form a "cult of unintelligibility" and are thus narrowly restricted in mutually shared views and "theories of life" and art. The establishment of the direct and non-invidious, indeed inevitable and naturally integral relation of propaganda to literature, even and especially of the highest order, is made secure, if we accept the fairly tight and convincing arguments of Mr. Belgion, reinforced as they are by the not inconsiderable authority of Mr. Eliot. The latter has this significant statement to add:²

We do tend, I think, to organize our tastes in various arts into a whole; we aim in the end at a theory of life, or a view of life, and so far as we are conscious, to terminate our enjoyment of the arts in a philosophy, and our philosophy in a religion—in such a way that the personal to oneself is fused and completed in the impersonal and general, not ex-

²*op. cit.* p. 599.

tinguished, but enriched, expanded, developed, and more itself by becoming more something not itself.

III

These remarks betray a more than casual interest in religion as the culminating fruition of art, an interest understandable enough in the light of Mr. Eliot's well-known concern with religion. Yet it draws away from half of the original title and subject of his essay.

It would be instructive and amusing to set beside these affirmations of belief the credo of a group of critics who could scarcely be considered as whole-hearted co-believers in the system of criticism evolved by Eliot, Belgie, and the entire coterie of writers who filled the fastidiously printed pages of *THE CRITERION*.²⁴ From the extreme position at which they stand, any agreement in fundamental principles might seem impossible except insofar as common sense is common to both groups, together with a mutual zeal for analytical and consistent methods in criticism.

The group I speak of is one with a deep—one might almost say, a *vested*—interest in the relationship between literature and propaganda. While bourgeois critics in general have cautiously avoided the subject, these writers have boldly preempted the ground as theirs by right of inheritance. They have in recent years developed a body of theory now impressively collected in the various speeches delivered at the American Writers' Congress of 1935.

United to help make the world, through their writing, somewhat less of a jungle filled with predatory beasts, they have attempted to formulate some acceptable program of procedure. The record of their discussions and addresses before an audience of international representation is a revealing account of opposing

²⁴Since this was written, Mr. Eliot has ceased editing and publishing *THE CRITERION*. Hence my alteration of the tense from "fill" to "filled". A footnote is not the usual mode of noticing the passing of a distinguished contemporary, but I may be indulged this feeble sigh at so lamentable a demise, if I say, quoting Macaulay, that *THE CRITERION* achieved a "noiseless revolution" in contemporary criticism—*Editor's Note*.

views and theories resolved into a fundamental agreement on main principles."

Among them are some of the most important names in American literature today—John Dos Passos, Waldo Frank, Malcolm Cowley, Kenneth Burke, Granville Hicks, James T. Farrell, Michael Gold, and many more. Naturally, so brilliant a gathering presents a variety and originality of viewpoint scarcely imaginable in, say, a meeting of the United States Chamber of Commerce; these men of letters believe in individuality and not in rugged individualism, which is really the dullest sort of conformity in the world.

It was inevitable that propaganda and its relation to literature should receive its share of discussion at the Congress. Among the views brought forward, those of Kenneth Burke are of major importance; Mr. Burke is clearly one of the keenest theorists in the ranks of left-wing criticism. In his speech on "Revolutionary Symbolism in America" he propounded arguments in respect to propaganda and literature which are far from extreme and to which some of the most cautious critics who do not share his views in social philosophy might readily assent. His immediate purpose was a defense of the word "people" in place of "worker" as a revolutionary symbol; but he went further and discussed propaganda in general as applied to literature with more than usual penetration. For Mr. Burke, propaganda, to be effective, must be implicit, not bald and extraneous; it must have definite points of contact with the psychoses of those it seeks to win over and should employ the arts of ingratiation rather than those of blunt conviction.

Much explicit propaganda must be done, but that is mainly the work of the pamphleteer and political organizer. In the purely imaginative field, the writer's best contribution to the revolutionary cause is *implicit*. If he shows a keen interest in every manifestation of our cultural development, and at the same time gives a clear indication as to where his sympathies lie, this seems to me the most effective long-pull

²AMERICAN WRITERS CONGRESS; International Publishers, New York, (1935). The almost complete neglect of this important book by American critical reviews is as characteristic as its enthusiastic acceptance by a reviewer in the LONDON TIMES book section is surprising; see that reviewer's analysis reprinted in the NEW MASSES, June 30, 1936, pp. 24-26.

contribution to propaganda he can make. For he thus indirectly links his cause with the kinds of intellectual and emotional engrossment that are generally admired. He speaks in behalf of his cause, not in the ways of a lawyer's brief, but by the sort of things he associates with it. In a rudimentary way, this is what our advertisers do when they recommend a particular brand of cigarette by picturing it as being smoked under desirable conditions; it is the way in which the best artists of the religious era recommended or glorified their Faith; and I imagine it would be the best way of proceeding today. Reduced to a precept, the formula would run: Let one encompass as many desirable features of our cultural heritage as possible—and let him make sure that his political alignment figures prominently among them.

We convince a man by reason of the values which we and he hold *in common*. Propaganda (the extension of one's recruiting into ever widening areas) is possible only insofar as the propagandist and the propagandized have *kindred* values, share the *same* base of reference. If you and I agree on a criterion of justice, I may turn you against a certain institution, such as capitalism, by showing that it makes for injustice.

There is, to be sure, a certain shrewd naïveté about these remarks, isolated as they are from their context by the necessity for presenting them as quotations, and something to make one smile in the analogy with cigarette-advertising; but there is also a practical good sense and sagacity that removes the incendiary aspect which a more hasty view of the function of propaganda in literature would inevitably offer. There is, certainly, no conceivable objection to the good reason of the last few sentences; they might well be regarded as a corollary to the conclusions of Mr. Belgium. The sensible tendency of revolutionary movements in general at the present time is to find points of contact with the bourgeois mind which may win it to them without frightening it away by slogans and unfamiliar ideology. And from this point of view the writer becomes, as it were, a collaborator with the reader in achieving a new vision of society, in some of its phases at least and in proportion to the talents of the writer; whether or not the writer is impelled by the imperatives of Marxism in his work, if he merely realizes that the very essence of modern life is economic conflict and the struggle between the capitalist and exploited

classes, his representation of life will be the truer for this knowledge. Marxism will obviously not make a good writer out of a bad one; but the perception of the social realities which Marxism attempts to interpret gives greater keenness and power to the individual writer's vision of the world; for it is not too much to say that Marxian socialism supplies today the one unifying force of cultural theory and practice left to a society committed to a rejection of Romanticism in all its forms.

Granville Hicks, in an address on "The Dialectics of the Development of Marxist Criticism", pursued the same path in urging against the fallacious and crude dualism of political and literary standards which some Marxist critics have followed. His warning to such critics is sufficiently conveyed in this paragraph:

The strength of Marxist criticism is that it recognizes the social [i. e., class] origins and function of literature. In other words, it recognizes the artist's identity with other men in a real world of economic forces. Its weakness has been that it too frequently ignores those qualities of the artist that distinguish him, as an individual and especially as an artist, from other men. This weakness is not inherent in Marxism but results from the limitations of Marxist critics. It can and should be eliminated. Nothing, however, can be gained, and much may be lost, by sacrificing the strength of Marxism in an attempt to remedy its weakness.²⁰

Waldo Frank gave further weight to the views shared by the Writers' Congress in speaking of the "values of the Revolutionary Writer". His conception of propaganda is at once more subtle and vague than that of any other of this group of theorists; the function of art he conceives as a sort of conditioning agency which makes men more effective revolutionaries:

The basic social function of art is *so to condition men that they will, as a social body, be the medium for the actions of growth and change required by their needs*. These social actions, to be healthy, must be performed within the true experience of *the whole of life involved*—and the conveying, the naturalizing, of this experience is the especial function of art.

... In our world where a chaos of forces is breaking down the life of man before our eyes, the chief conditioning

²⁰*op. cit.* p. 97.

art—although all the arts have their place—must be one to synthesize our complex pasts and present, and to direct them. This is the art of words, by which man captures the worlds and selves that have borne him, and renders them alive with his own vision.

We know, now, roughly, the kind of social action to demand of our literary art. It is in general to condition men for the multitude of direct actions of which their life consists: it is, with us, the crucial task of conditioning our readers—who we hope will be the workers, the farmers, and their allies, to become the effective medium of revolution.²⁷

He is quite direct in his views of literature as propaganda, as it will be seen from these quotations; yet even he has the caution to keep literature what it must always be, not merely subordinate to revolutionary needs but an instrument which will "create the medium" for the transmission of revolutionary ideals while at the same time preserving its own autonomy as art. Art is all the more necessary for such a purpose, since art brings with it its own persuasion and magnetic force:

There is no reason why good literature should not be of high documentary importance, and have a strong political appeal. Indeed, in a dynamic age like ours, a profound literary art, insofar as it must reveal the deepest evolving forces of man at the time, must be "propaganda" for these forces and for the goal of these forces. But this kind of propaganda derives from the work's effectiveness as literary art and is dependent on it.²⁸

IV

The analysis presented in the foregoing sections of this chapter results in the firm establishment of at least two facts: (1) the totally non-invidious nature of propaganda as a term used in connection with literature; and (2) the essential agreement as to the meaning of the term among two widely different groups of established critics, both abroad and in America. To this testimony, fragmentary as it must be for reasons of space, may be added that of a third group, so far unidentified with either of the other two.

England has recently witnessed the growth of a new school of

²⁷*op. cit.* p. 72.

²⁸*op. cit.* pp. 74-75.

poetry, whose leaders, profoundly dissatisfied with the old order, have sought to create the basis for a new and more vigorous art, without, at the same time, definitely committing themselves exclusively to reactionary aestheticism of the T. S. Eliot-CRITERION type or to Communism. Their names are by this time familiar to the world: W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, and C. Day Lewis are the chief figures among them; others, John Lehmann and Michael Roberts, have done much to introduce and explain their work. Beginning as a revulsion against the tameness of Georgian verse and the entire post-War attitude of despair, these writers have steadily progressed toward a position which begins to resemble Communism. Considerations of technique have largely absorbed the interests of this group, and they have made strikingly original, although uncertain and experimental, contributions to a new method of writing. Yet the revolutionary spirit of their poetry has kept pace with technical innovation; to them, poetry is a weapon as surely as it is to those who openly espouse the view of propaganda in literature as an important feature of strategy in the class-struggle.

Michael Roberts' introductions to the first anthologies of this group, *New Signatures* and *New Country*, present in greater detail the chief aspects of this revolt against bourgeois society and against the esoteric or colorless in poetry. John Lehmann, in a long and informative article published in the Russian periodical, *International Literature*, further develops and analyzes the tendencies apparent in the work of this new school of poets. Thus far, their own published works have been few and not extensive; but one of their number has provided us with a brilliantly-written account of their poetic ideals. *A Hope for Poetry*, by C. Day Lewis, stands alone among recent books of criticism as a manifesto and a description of purpose; it must be regarded as, so far, the only authoritative statement of what Auden, Spender, and Lewis are trying to do.

Claiming as their spiritual godfathers, T. S. Eliot, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and Wilfred Owen, the author proceeds to an outline of the achievements of this new school which is concerned, in the main, with their contributions to the technique of poetry. Only in Chapter VIII does he closely approach the subject of the

social philosophy and purpose that lies behind their work. Here his words are unmistakable and clear; seeking a way between the two positions, either a definite commitment to Communism or a compromise with the bourgeois antipathy for outright political alignment on the part of writers, these young poets and essayists, most of them with upper class intellectual backgrounds, have turned farther and farther to the left, impressed through personal experience of social conditions in Europe and England with the need for action and decision. "Let your poem be a kiss or a blow, echo is no answer," says Day Lewis in his preface; and this injunction symbolizes their growth toward an understanding of their place and function in the cultural tradition of modern England.

The position of Day Lewis on the matter of propaganda is eminently sensible and less diffident than a reading of Lehmann's article might indicate. He develops the sound view that "there is no reason why poetry should not also be propaganda; the effect of invocation, of poetry, and of propaganda is to create a state of mind; and it is not enough to say that poetry must do unconsciously what propaganda does consciously, for that would be to dismiss all didactic poetry from that of the Bible downwards. All one can say is that propaganda verse is to be condemned when the didactic is achieved at the expense of the poetic: poetry, in fact, whatever else it may or may not be, must be poetry—a sound, if obvious, conclusion."² He proceeds, after this declaration, to a defense of Auden's "The Dance of Death" against charges as to its propagandist tendencies.

This position points to those inescapable conclusions which have been apparent throughout the course of these pages: literature as propaganda cannot be criticized merely as propaganda and thus dismissed; on the other hand, literature which has at the same time a propagandist purpose must first be discussed on the basis of its merits as literature, a task which will, of course, be difficult for critics to whom the slightest hint of propaganda is as a red rag to a bull.

It is not hard to select examples of propagandist literature which, viewed in this light, can qualify as genuine art; and it is

²A *HOPE FOR POETRY* (2nd ed., B. Blackwell, Oxford, 1935) 49.

ultimately its art which will permanently recommend any book to the intelligent public. But to regard art as the sole, even though primary, motive of literature is both absurd and impractical, while to confuse the issue by emphasizing and adversely criticizing the propagandist element in any writing is to ignore the original impulse which gives rise, for instance, to such a book as *Man's Fate* (*La Condition Humaine*) by André Malraux.

Man's Fate is, in a real sense, a superior revolutionary novel, subtly conceived and executed, with the creed of Communism as its essence; man's fate is connected inseparably with the fate of Communism, almost identified with it in one passage, as the one faith capable of endowing the misery and struggle of man against the forces of evil with the dignity one of the chief characters strives to gain. Against the background of the economic interests which, with ghastly finality, are shown manipulating for their own ends the contending forces in the Chinese Revolution of 1927 and contriving the betrayal by Chiang Kai Shek of his Communist allies, the points of view of Communist, terrorist, reactionary, parasite, and financier are delineated, with a depth of understanding of each type of psychosis rarely seen. The author's own stand is clear enough even through the conflicting philosophies that form the solid texture of the book, apart from the numerous episodes of intense and brutal action. Though the book ends with the musings of old Gisors, the father of one of the most important characters (Kyo, an organizer of the Shanghai insurrection), his defeatist contemplative philosophizing cannot be said to express the author's own view of man's fate—an eternal struggle toward a humanly possible ideal.

It is in the direction of such books that the movement of revolutionary fiction will inevitably proceed. For it is only in such examples of revolutionary thinking embodied in a pattern of fact and concentrated imaginative penetration that the crudeness of the black and white contrast so prevalent in the proletarian novel can be resolved into the components of genuine art, made more real and convincing. Its function will be to elevate the class-struggle out of confusion of purpose, division of energies, and futile action to the level of a profound conflict which can only be regarded as a

ceaseless urge toward the ethical and the just in human affairs, an urge the forces of reaction will naturally fight to the last ditch.

An examination of such writing as the novels of Malraux should also include his fine study, from the journalist's standpoint, of the revolutionary movements in China, "The Conquerors". Malraux's work, the better examples of *reportage* (a new and very important type of contemporary writing), and, for all its vacillation, the poetry of Auden, Spender, Day Lewis, together with the more noteworthy of American contributions to social analysis in fiction or verse, such as the novels of Dos Passos, all reveal an extremely interesting movement toward an objective attitude that makes for a better art than can be discovered in most writing of this nature.

The hint which Herbert Read has given about the *implicit* condemnation of bourgeois society in the novels of Henry James²⁰ points to a wiser strategical approach than the gigantic social, moral, and economic issues at stake have thus far permitted writers of revolutionary literature to make. Robert Cantwell's *The Land of Plenty* is an example of this more restrained and more quietly effective type of writing; and it will not be strange if more will follow such leadership.

Propaganda, however much reason and logic may sustain its validity in literature, remains too deeply rooted in a multitude of adverse connotations in the minds of the people whom revolutionary writers hope to reach for any rash and careless incorporation in literature. The entire theory of propagandist writing—apart from the propaganda pamphlet, which may dispense with theory in making its more direct and utilitarian appeal—is still in a state of flux and uncertainty; before firm principles on its proper use are agreed upon by those who are at present making a study of the problem, no writer can presume to be wholly successful in transferring it to his work.

Nor is it to be supposed that the Marxian view of propaganda can be the only practical one, even though it is at present the most complete and dogmatic, if, at the same time, mystical, as befits the

²⁰ENGLISH PROSE STYLE, Herbert Read (G. Bell, London, 1934) 218-219; and see the passages quoted from "Reason and Romanticism", *infra*. One may now add the discussion of Henry James and his purpose as a novelist by Stephen Spender, *THE DESTRUCTIVE ELEMENT*; Houghton, Mifflin, Boston, 1936.

tenets of what is essentially a new religion. A democratic society requires its own technique of propaganda; it is difficult to believe that what has proven effective in contemporary Russian literature will be successful in England, France, or America, the last strongholds of democratic capitalism in the western world.

An adaptation in method to the particular social environment and the frame of mind it fosters is the urgent need of revolutionary writing, if it is to accomplish the purposes set down for it by the theorists of the American Writers' Congress. Already America has produced a notable collection of proletarian literature²¹ distinguished, as far as its propagandist aspect is concerned, by a vagueness and division of principle that makes for weakness. Individuality is, naturally, the essence of all literature; but unity of purpose will make its proletarian representation far stronger than it has been.

And yet, when the critics on both sides have had their say, one may well conclude that there is no real need for avowed propaganda in literature. While it is rightly conceived of by those of the left as an instrument of great power in the class struggle, it is doubtful whether the openly propagandist writer achieves his purpose as fully as he might by allowing an *implicit* expression of the views he holds and the side he has taken to become clear in his work. The tremendous experience of merely taking a part or an active interest in the struggle between the classes now being waged in the capitalist society is more than sufficient for the material upon which the writer's art will focus. Propaganda is so direct and bald a method of presentation upon present theories that, even without the prejudice and injustice which dominate bourgeois criticism of proletarian literature, it can easily defeat its own purpose. The genuinely forceful means of attaining the ends toward which the writers of the left are moving are, after all, not new or original: they can be seen in the works of Tolstoy, Dostoevski, Zola, even Dickens. It is a great deal merely to present the facts of experience themselves; many a good writer's talent has barely sufficed for this primary task. When, in addition, these facts must bear the

²¹See the only sizable anthology of it yet printed: *PROLETARIAN LITERATURE IN THE UNITED STATES* (International Publishers, New York, 1935); and particularly the fine introduction by Joseph Freeman.

further load of propaganda, of the possible distortion and dislocation required by a definite thesis, it is no wonder that the structure topples, its foundations crumble, and the critic "above the battle" smirks with complacent disapproval.

The objectivity of Dostoevski may be studied with profit by writers who feel a purpose behind their work stronger than the mere desire to describe private moods, manners, and raptures. The merciless psychology of *Crime and Punishment* reveals more powerfully than any amount of avowed propaganda the corrupt social system of old Russia which could produce a Raskolnikov; the tremendous canvas of *War and Peace* is better propaganda against war and against Napoleons than any carefully-concocted analysis of war's folly by a lesser writer. Heated argument has always been a notoriously poor way to convince; yet avowed propaganda is not far from heated argument.

The wisdom of serpents is akin to the gentleness of doves in this particular matter; Christ, as subtle a propagandist for noble causes as the world has known and certainly a consummate orator, did not, even so, escape the wrath of the haters of propaganda, i. e., other than their own. Socrates and Montaigne were, in their ways, shrewd and resourceful propagandists; yet neither wholly escaped the consequences of their irony, understatement, and clever subterfuge. Even these men, with a message as important as that of any passionate Communist, could not succeed although they used the subtlest thought and expression, the most carefully calculated means of ingratiating and persuasion. It is from their example that the propagandist author has still much to learn. Would it not be wise to use a refined diplomacy demanded by the momentous nature of the ideas inevitably aroused by the injustices of a social order that forces even the non-propagandist writer to be more careful of his *manner* than of his actual *subject-matter*? What proletarian writing needs is subtlety and finesse, at least among the intellectuals it hopes to reach; proletarian literature destined for the masses has yet to evolve its own methods of persuasion, to establish its undeniable kinship with the great folk-writing of the ages. And this is, beyond doubt, its greatest problem: for the classless society of the future must have a literature that can wholly satisfy its needs and further brighten the abundant life made possible by economic justice.

by Charles Washburn Nichols

BIRD SONG IN ENGLAND

THE habits of a New England boyhood are not easily broken, even when one has been a university professor on the banks of the Mississippi for more years than one likes to remember. I was brought up to know American birds, and when I came to teach American poetry I discovered that a knowledge of such things as bobolinks and bluebirds did not come amiss. English poetry, however, revealed a gap in my preparation. I could not hear the skylarks and the cuckoos, the redbreasts and the nightingales. A sabbatical year in England was obviously imperative. But one cannot ask for a leave of absence to become acquainted with the birds of English poetry! I said that I wanted to study eighteenth-century drama in the Bodleian and the British Museum. It was true enough, for that is my field, but the dim light of the Bodleian lost its lure on certain warm September afternoons. I was for the out-of-doors!

Nor were those rambles about Oxford in the mellow sunshine of early autumn in vain. I shall never forget, for example, my triumphant discovery that Keats was right when he wrote:

*There the kingfisher saw his plumage bright
Vying with fish of brilliant dye below.*

Our kingfisher does not fit into that picture. Even some of my students had heard the harsh rattle of the American bird, and knew its slate-blue color and rather awkward-looking crest. That was my visualization, too. But one afternoon of sunshine and white clouds and pale blue sky found me on Boar's Hill by Matthew Arnold's lone signal tree, watching the grayish-white towers and pinnacles of "that sweet city with her dreaming spires", as the hills beyond folded her in. Later I came down to South Hinksey, walked to Ferry Hinksey by the field-path, over brooks and stiles, and was going home across the meadows when Keats's kingfisher

suddenly flitted along the stream before me, a flash of green and blue and gold, a brilliant epitome of that brilliant afternoon. At last I saw what Keats had seen, and could respond to his picture. Later we saw the kingfisher frequently, as we punted on the pleasant stretches of the upper Cherwell, along the quiet meadows past flocks of sheep.

I shall also never forget another revaluation of some lines by Keats. I had long loved the quiet beauty of the "Ode to Autumn", but the song of the redbreast had never sounded in my ears:

*Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.*

We were walking up Shotover Hill, one morning in September. It was a dreamy day, with the haze very thick, and a lovely mistiness over the far landscape; trees and fields only gradually took shape as we strolled along. And all the way up the lanes the redbreasts sang from the high hedgerows. I can never read Keats's lines now without living over again that morning on Shotover.

The redbreast, indeed, became our favorite bird, as it daintily hopped along on its spindling legs beneath the shrubbery beside the walks in Worcester or Trinity gardens, neat and cheerful and unafraid. Later in London it always sang at sunset as I walked home over the hill from the Highgate tube station after a day's work in the Museum—a clear, serene song above my head. Individual redbreasts I remember. One was singing in Ely Cathedral, where a verger told me that it made its home within the cathedral walls, singing ecstatically with organ and choir boys. Another fearlessly drove a grimy house-sparrow from a feeding-box in Greenwich Park. But the general impression of its peaceful song will linger the longest, as I used to hear it when, on February afternoons, I varied my homeward journey by taking the tube to Hampstead. I would climb the narrow, winding streets to the Round Pond and Jack Straw's Castle on the highest part of the Heath, and walk home to Highgate over Parliament Hill, across wet green fields, with the sunset behind me, and the joyous singing of redbreasts everywhere.

Next to the redbreast in our favor, among the birds we first learned to know at Oxford, comes the blue-tit, the English cousin

of our chickadee. The great-tit, to be sure, with his black head and collar, looks more like the chickadee, but all the tits have the chickadee's characteristic habits, and of the four varieties we came to know, the blue-tit will be the longest remembered. We first saw him as we loitered along the Lime Walk in Trinity Gardens, and along Addison's Walk in Magdalen. But we came to know him best during our winter in London. There we had a third-story living-room with a window that looked down upon the back garden, the trees of which were just beneath the broad sill. Here we used to keep crumbs and nuts all winter, and the redbreasts and blue-tits were our constant companions, with only a pane of glass between. It was exciting for the children when the tits first began to visit us and fearlessly show at close range their bright blue crowns, their white cheeks outlined with black, and their yellow underparts. They made the branches below us lively, and on certain mild Sunday afternoons in December we would sit at the open window, with no fire in the room, and watch their antics. Lovely bits of color they were, flitting hither and yon in the treetops, sounding their cheerful calls.

There were other birds we first met in Oxford and came to know later in different circumstances. The first English bird on my list, for example, was the pied wagtail. On our first morning in Oxford, fresh from a landing in Liverpool the day before, we were walking in delighted admiration through the hoary quadrangles, and there on the marvelous greensward were numerous black and white birds running about after insects, and teetering their long tails like our spotted sandpipers and our water-thrushes at home. They were so distinctive that I knew I should be able to name them as soon as we could find in an Oxford bookshop a simple bird-book for the children. And so the pied wagtail will always be associated in our minds with college quads. I saw an individual one later in an unforgettable place. It was a beautiful day in October, after we were settled for the winter on the northern heights of London, a day of such rare sunshine that I played truant from eighteenth-century researches in the British Museum to seek a genuine relic of the eighteenth century in the heart of a wood. Taking a tram from the foot of Muswell Hill to Enfield Town, I tramped north through a quiet countryside, past such inns as the

"Pied Bull" and the "Spotted Cow", and presently came, in Theobald's Park, upon the old gray stone archway known as Temple Bar. It was hard, seeing it there in its leafy solitude, gathering moss, to imagine it looking down upon the traffic of Fleet Street. And a pied wagtail was teetering along its pediment!

Two other birds there were at Oxford, black and ungainly, but magical, nevertheless, for the mere mention of their names brings England before me, calls up scenes of quiet beauty: yellowing limes, mellow beech woods, high elms, pale afternoon sunshine, drowsy closes, gray Norman towers. Let me bring before you some of the pictures that arise when I think of cawing rooks and chattering daws. Perhaps I have sought shelter from a passing shower beneath the lime trees at the foot of Christ Church Meadow, beside the quiet Cherwell, and as I stand watching the familiar college towers there comes the cawing of rooks, distant and subdued, blending harmoniously with the scene. Or I am wandering in New College Gardens between tea and dinner, and the sun is toward setting. It lights up the red of the creepers clinging to gray backgrounds, it shines on the old city wall, that fine relic of the fourteenth century, and it makes the view of Magdalen Tower a vision of delight. There is an old-world charm and peace here, broken only by the persistent chattering of the jackdaws in a neighboring garden. Or again it is a glorious morning in early March, and I am strolling through the Cambridge "backs" beside the tiny Cam, enjoying the beauty of the crocuses beside the path. The elm blossoms are purple against the sky, and cawing rooks are repairing their nests in the highest branches.

Or perhaps I am standing on a hill beside a fine old cedar, gazing up at that great pile, the cathedral and abbey church of St. Alban, admiring the magnificent central tower built of Roman bricks from the ancient Verulamium. Around it the gray-naped jackdaws are shrilly calling, darting in and out of the crannies between the stones. They recall to me the spire of Salisbury Cathedral, the favorite of Constable, whose pictures of it in the National Gallery had fascinated me before I stood beside it one afternoon in early spring. Across the great open stretch of the cathedral close the eye follows the line of picturesque old houses that extend all the way from the High-Street Gate to the Bishop's Palace. Nearer

at hand is a low wall with moss-covered coping, around the green lawn of the cathedral yard itself, and closer yet are some fine spreading cedars, lovely in the late afternoon sunshine. But the birds that have brought this picture back to me call the eye upward: cawing rooks in the high quiet elms; chattering daws around the tapering spire.

It ought not to surprise us that birds so awkward and unpoetic in themselves, like the rooks, true cousins of our American crows, should be associated with poetic scenes. They are an essential part of certain landscapes. English poets have always used rooks in descriptions of the quiet English countryside, especially at the hour of sunset and dusk. My sabbatical "researches" merely showed me the reality of the beauty suggested by lines I have always been drawn to, from Shakespeare's

*Light thickens, and the crow
Makes wing to the rooky wood,*

to Coleridge's

*When the last rook
Beats its straight path along the dusky air,*

and Masfield's

*An endless quiet valley reaches out
Past the blue hills into the evening sky;
Over the stubble, cawing, goes a rout
Of rooks from harvest, flagging as they fly.*

Another dusky bird, however, calls up no scene of quiet beauty, but rather the chimney pots of London. The starlings are forever chattering on the chimney pots or blackening the gray roofs of the city. Out of that London winter come memories of three other birds: fluttering pigeons beneath the lions of Trafalgar Square; black-headed gulls on London River; and thrushes singing in the fog. How cheerful the pigeons of the British Museum were on those rare mornings of really sparkling sunshine when the Union Jack was flying from the flagstaff on the roof against a clear blue sky. And always along the river were the restless gulls. From London Bridge to Chelsea they were as much a part of the scene as the barges themselves. Many a time I used to watch them as

I crossed Waterloo Bridge after an afternoon of Shakespeare in the "Old Vic". I never tired of that picture as I paused on the bridge to watch it when the twilight haze was beginning to soften the dome of St. Paul's and the towers of the Parliament Buildings, and the lights were beginning to come out on the Embankment. The tugs slipped beneath me, their funnels tipped back to avoid the bridge, and the gulls filled the air with their sharp cries. But it was the thrush that turned our thought toward spring. Morning and night he would perch on a high branch across the street from our house and pour forth his triumphant song. With all the emphasis and love of repetition of our brown thrasher, which isn't a thrush at all, the English song-thrush has a musical, thrush-like tone. His vespers marked the approach of spring, and spring meant skylarks, and primroses, and daffodils!

I like to remember that I became acquainted with some of the more famous birds of English poetry on spring trips out of London to literary shrines. Thus Stoke Poges will always be associated with my first skylark. On a cloudless Saturday afternoon in March we took a train from Paddington to Slough, and walked a scant two miles to the churchyard immortalized by Gray. We lingered long under the ancient yews; it was a place of peace, and we hated to leave it. But the crowning glory of that afternoon was still to come. As we began to recross the plain a skylark began to climb higher and higher against the blue, singing ecstatically. Up to a great height it climbed, still pouring forth its song. Then suddenly it volplaned to earth, and the song was still. But another lark rose and carried it on, a bubbling shower of music. The ecstatic abandon of those notes as they rained down upon us is with me yet, when I read my Shelley.

The skylark was soon a daily treat, rising from the Crouch End playing fields under Shepherd's Hill, where we could watch the whole performance from the first spring off the ground to the final plunge back to the spot from which the bird rose. Presently we heard a blackbird's song late one afternoon in Queen's Wood and knew that spring had come indeed.

With April came more trips out of London, for the call of the English countryside on warm April mornings was irresistible. One morning quite early in the month we left a train at Gerrard's

Cross, and started out on foot to see Buckinghamshire. We walked across country, with larks singing joyously above us, over stiles, along lanes, and through open fields, and presently came to a little hollow in a beech wood. Here we picked our first primroses, and heard a chaffinch singing gloriously on a branch over our heads. A handsome bird, the chaffinch, with pink breast and white wing-bars. One meets him everywhere along the roads. Only the next week I lunched with one. I had gone down on a noon train from Victoria to Boxhill in the North Downs of Surrey, and a climb past Meredith's "Flint Cottage" had given me a tremendous appetite. So I made my way to the old Burford Bridge Hotel under the Down, the inn where Keats finished "Endymion", and presently found myself sitting beside French windows in the dining-room that looks out on the hill. Outside, not a yard from me, was a plate of bones, and there, while I lingered over the rhubarb tart and custard, came a great-tit, a blue-tit, and a chaffinch to be my luncheon companions!

But to return to the hollow in the beech wood. On the farther side we found the little hamlet of Jordans, where William Penn lies buried. From Jordans it was a pleasant walk through fields and woods to Beaconsfield. Now our real destination was the Milton cottage in Chalfont St. Giles, but we covered a deal of country before we reached it. Delightful countryside it was, with glossy yellow celandine by the roadside, and in the hedges the yellow-hammers. I was curious to hear them say, "A little bit of bread and no cheese", as our bird-book described their song, but they never said a word! Magpies, too, there were, both bird and inn. A woman at an out-of-the-way farmhouse on a hillside, directing us on our way to the elusive village where Milton sought refuge from the plague, told us to cross a meadow, turn to the right at two cottages, and inquire again when we reached the "Magpies". We found it at last, but the story of our wanderings, of how we came upon a sheepfold of gawky young lambs, and saw an old-world windmill with sweeping arms, and met a group of hunters riding slowly home through Hodge Wood, must not be told, for there are no birds in it! We came at long last to the venerable cottage that marked the end of our pilgrimage. How we made the

train to London in a butcher's trap behind a Welsh pony is another story.

The month went by, and there were pilgrimages to ancient Winchester and ancient Canterbury, but still we had not heard the "two-fold shout" of the cuckoo. I almost heard it in the Forest of Fontainebleau on an Easter excursion out of Paris. Some of the party did hear it, as we stood on the rocks of the headwall of the Gorge of Franchard, but the best I could do was to buy a cuckoo whistle to take back to the children in London. I bought it of an old woman under Pharamonde, the oldest tree of the forest, and as she showed me how to blow it she exclaimed, "Le coucou du forêt!"

It was an English cuckoo, so to speak, that I heard first. We had taken a morning train from Charing Cross to Tunbridge Wells; on foot we had discovered Speldhurst, an unspoiled village in the Kentish hills, and had come at last to Penshurst and the old manor house of the Sidney family, its walls of mellow stone attracting the afternoon sunshine. We had lingered in the churchyard with its high hedges of clipped yew, listening to the thrushes, and had started to walk the two miles more to the railway station, picking primroses and blue violets as we went. And still no cuckoo! Then at last, without warning, came the two hollow notes that my ears must have been unconsciously tuned to receive. I could have written on the spot a poem entitled "On Hearing a Cuckoo in Kent", save for the fact that we had just time to make the six-o'clock train for London. But we had heard him at last:

Sumer is icumen in, lhude sing, cuccu.

How often we heard him around Ambleside in the month of May, mysteriously shouting from the hillsides, now near, now far, but never once showing himself, exactly as Wordsworth has described him in the poem which one may read in his own handwriting, as it hangs on the wall of Dove Cottage. I remember one in particular that called and called from the pines and beeches on the hillside above Ruskin's "Brantwood", as I sat one warm noon on a stonewall and looked across Coniston Water to Coniston "Auld Maan".

Spring in the English Lake Country is indescribable. It was

late that year. The patches of bracken on the fells were still yellow from the frosts of autumn, and when cloud-shadows swept over they still glowed like patches of sunlight, just as Wordsworth has described them in the fine line which he added late in life to "The Prelude". He speaks of the heights as

Clothed in the sunshine of the withering fern.

The passage cannot properly be appreciated until one has observed the phenomenon at first hand.

Spring finally came in with a rush. The leaves of the beeches and sycamores unfolded miraculously, the bracken began to unravel its crumpled folds, the tender green of the larches was beautiful, and all through the woods the blackthorn flaunted its white blossoms. The swifts reached Ambleside on the seventh, and on the eighth, in Grasmere, I noticed house-martins flying about the stone cottages. In the woods we saw the handsome bullfinch, and the redstart, and the blackcap. In the swirl of water under the Stock Ghyll Force we saw the little white-throated dipper, which kept lighting on a rock where the water washed it off each time. And on quiet moonlit nights there came to my window in the homelike hostel under Wansfell the quavering cry of a barn owl, blending with the steady babbling of the Rothay, and the occasional bleating of a sheep.

But the birds of that Lake Country that seemed to me the most typical were the birds of the fells and the moors: the wheatears and kestrels and pipits; the stonechats and the peewits. They recall the wilder and more forbidding mountain sides: Red Screes frowning down upon the Kirkstone Pass, or the bracing heights of Helvellyn. We used to climb the Kirkstone and have tea in the little white-walled inn at the top of the pass; on the way down the white-rumped wheatears and the meadow pipits flew before us along the stone walls that lined the road on either side, and the cry of the peewit or lapwing, that striking bird of the lonely moors, seemed a fitting expression of the spirit of the place. As I climbed one glorious day above the lonely Grisedale Tarn up the zigzag track on the side of Dollywaggon Pike, and scrambled on over the top of Dollywaggon to reach the summit of Helvellyn, my only

companions were occasional wheatears and stonechats and pipits, the latter not unlike the skylarks farther south.

It was the peewit, however, that seemed the embodiment of the lonely places among these northern fells. Not far from Keswick, in a high green sheep-pasture, is a Druid's Circle of great gray stones. It is in a magnificent situation, this pagan temple, with a wide sweep of mountains around it: Skiddaw and Saddleback to the north, cloud-capped; Helvellyn to the south, cloud-capped; and the mountains beyond Derwentwater. One feels here apart from man and his civilization, high on a sacred hill, where the antiquity of the druid stones sends one's mind back across the centuries. The only sound that breaks the solemn stillness is most appropriate for the place, the cry of the peewit as it wheels and tumbles in the air.

That spring in England only one bird disappointed us. The famous voice of Philomel was silent! But even so, I have heard a nightingale. Whenever the symphony orchestra plays Respighi's "Pines of Rome" I close my eyes as the third section is reached. It is moonlight, and against a background of muted strings a nightingale begins its song. It bubbles with emphatic happiness, pauses, and bubbles again. What does it matter that the notes are coming from a phonograph record? A real bird uttered them first, singing "of summer in full-throated ease". There is a thrilling liquid quality in its song, but I quite agree with the late D. H. Lawrence that the nightingale is not a sad bird. "Jug-jug-jug!" say the medieval writers," Lawrence declares, "to represent the little balls of lightning in the nightingale's throat. . . They say with that 'Jug! Jug! Jug!' that she is sobbing. . . How anyone who didn't have his ears on upside down ever heard the nightingale 'sobbing,' I don't know." But I cannot agree with Lawrence when he adds, "How Keats could write 'My Heart aches' is a mystery. 'What? What? What, John? Heart aches and a drowsy numbness pain? tra-la-la! tri-li-lilylilylilylilylily!'" We know why Keats's heart ached, and we know that he recognized the happiness of the bird's song. He used only one wrong word in his whole ode, the word "plaintive" in the last stanza. It wasn't the nightingale who was plaintive; it was Keats, sitting on a May morning in a Hampstead garden. And as I close my eyes while the orches-

tra plays I do not see the Pines of the Janiculum, since I have never been in Rome. I see the sunshine on the walls of the house in Hampstead, as I saw it on a day in spring, and the nightingale is singing in the secluded grove where Keats heard it, and where I waited in vain for its song. My sabbatical study of English birds has reached its final fruition!

by Gerard Previn Meyer

KNOWING AS WELL

Knowing as well the frequent flush
of sunlight trickling over stone
and splendors like the Parthenon,
do we praise Pindar overmuch?

Such music as the Greek distilled
from golden days and nights of onyx
out of our anguishes and panics
may not so certainly be built.

The surge and thunder of the sea
that Homer heard, whom Helen haunted
beats not so loudly when decanted
into Surf Bathing, Boardwalk Free.

And we, who fear the godly sun—
we wait to board a covered bus
and feel for the lost clear air no loss
until our cigarettes are gone.

by A. E. Johnson

TENET

Like some worn galleon of a bygone day
That throbbed to battle on the smoking deep,
And now is drawn from out the sparkling bay
And lies, split timber, in a dismal heap,
Even so is broken up my vessel old
Of worn beliefs. But not the gorgeous sign,
The brave blue flag inwrought with shining gold
Ablazoning this great belief of mine:

I hold that only Beauty can abide;
The very spheres are cinctured by a tune
That sets the psalmody of every tide:
We, grovelling, were quickened by a rune
Told in the booming of the moon-rocked sea:
We shall be healed only by harmony.

COME NOT AGAIN

Sleep on, come not again, ye blessed Dead;
Vain as your dying would your coming be:
Callous to shame, we are not to be led
From folly's path, even miraculously.
Oh, you are doubly dead, dead in the earth
And dead in human hearts, that still were steel
Though hosts of you should hover at our hearth
This night, in dumb wound-eloquent appeal.

We are become so dull that should one find
For our extremity the Holy Grail
(One of your very sons of christly mind)
And from a war-shook vine should then regale
Our perjured lips at some great festival—
No, it would make no difference at all.

TO A POETESS THREATENED WITH BLINDNESS

Count me not brutal that I coldly say—
It does not anguish me that some white dawn
You will not see the silver of the day
Shredding its loveliness upon the lawn,
Nor mark how summer with her purple lips
Wine-beautiful has stained the pansy's breast;
You will not see the homeward-coming ships
Nor the first bird laboring at the next.

I shall remember then how Night for you
Was more a feeling of the robe of Even
Silken about your limbs, and how the blue
Glory of stars was with your soul enwoven;
I shall recall what carolling birds are come
Permanently unto your heart for home.

BIRTH OF THE HEART

It is not at the womb the heart is born;
There is a cold unchronicled, night birth—
The stabbed conception in the heart forlorn
That is utterly alone on earth.
And then do we rehearse our final part,
Forespend the fearfulness of Death's dark plan;
He knows no solitude like thine, my heart,
Not yet the courage of the first last man.

We are but Nature's finest trick re-given;
The lonely chime of one lone heart is ours;
Shakespeare and I, one man, have troubled heaven
In vain, and pitifully hailed the stars:
And wounded have I crept to Calvary
To find, yes, even there—a bleeding me.

WHITE MOMENTS

In those white moments when we know so much
We know that truth itself is but a dream,
We know that all morality is such
Only to mortal man; almost we seem
To suffer not from darkness, but from light,
And could we plead with any god in prayer
The prayer were for the dimming of this sight
Which sees but muddy bases everywhere.

We cannot brake the wheeling of our world;
Nor speak of whither to the whirling Sun;
Nor chart the shore to which we shall be hurled
From Time's long sea when its last tide has run:
Only the flowering present can we make
Good in its very hour, and for its own sake.

TO OXFORD

I am not thine, nor now can ever be,
Thou great good Mother in thy glorious home.
Alien I am, for all my pride of thee,
And howsoever worshipful I come
To gaze a lover on thy lovely face,
Something there is that leads me to forego
Thy courts, and like a vagabond to pace
Thy haunted alleys when the sun is low.

Yet if to serve a Cause forever lost
By Death's poor reckoning; if to believe
Strongly where Beauty bids, nor count the cost
Of lyric truth; some midnight to perceive
The moon a Paten and the stars a Vine—
If these of thy sonship are, am I not thine?

PROTAGONIST

Arrows upon arrows of the leaden rain
Spatter and groin my pony's back and head;
He does not tug upon the tether chain
But broods above the plot where he has fled
With an ancient dumb disgust. This he has shown,
Poor Cayuse, through innumerable years,
And to his mind one dim half-thought is known—
"Sometime, do I but wait, this disappears."

A text more grim is man's. For as I view,
From out my tent, the inhospitable plain,
I seem to see the patience Shakespeare knew
Bedrenched of life; alone; unbowed; serene;
Infernally pitted as my pony there,
Garnering the thought of Hamlet, and of Lear.

I HAVE KNOWN THIS MASTER DEATH

I have known this master Death a great while now,
From the early dreaming of my Mother dead
(Horror that scarce the dawn could disavow,
So pure within a child are love and dread).
Then in long years of War I have dwelt with Death,
Been shaken of his toil in every limb:
And in the grey unfruitful aftermath
I have had comfort in the thought of him.

Wherefore Death has no rendezvous with me;
Rather, like him who has been forced to pace
Along the road with one hideous to see
Whom yet he learns to like—at some steep place,
Too long and steep for my scarce-whispering heart,
Knowingly I shall say—Death, here we part.

AGENDA

Who goes for radium to the rubbish heap
May go to shadows on a madder quest:
The shadows fall, in truth, but also leap,
And sunwashed ramparts of a Wall attest.
But who may pave the fog? With what ghost shoes
Find purchase in the shade for feet that grope?
By what fay formula shall man transfuse
Soil into shadow, and march up the slope?

Man's spirit may precipitate this murk;
Crystal its texture with a salt despair;
From the impalpable his hands may work
Darkness to clay, clay to a winding stair,
On on and up, and with the scaling done,
Locate the building, and behold the Sun.

OUT OF EDEN

We do not live by years, nor yet by days;
We do not live by memorable hours;
We live by moments, moments when our ways
Come suddenly upon the scent of flowers
Time-wafted from the vale where we were born,
Who still are Adam's breed, whose very blood
Dripped on an Eden pathway from a thorn
That scored our hands within an Eden wood.

And now we are like men that dimly see
Sitting all patiently within the Sun
With an interminable rosary
Of ancient truth coiled at their feet; whereon,
Though unremittingly their hands they feed,
Comes but at rarest intervals, the Bead.

TO AN ANGEL OF THE LIVE COAL

Abide with me, O infinitely dear,
Dear as the life even, stronger than Death,
Whose touch eternally inspiriteth
The human heart, hallowing its joy and fear.
Thine was the loveliness of quelling hands
Imposed on chaos; thou laidst the stairs to heaven
That Jacob saw; psalmist and seer were given
Their deathless utterance at thy commands.

The very hammerings upon the Cross,
The jingle of Judas' coin, are tuned of thee,
As this, yea even this, my melody
Pleading within a song against thy loss
O infinitely Dear, at lack of whom
This heart were lead, this body a tomb.

by John Abbott Clark

A TOUCHSTONE FOR INTELLECTUALS

FRANK MOORE COLBY

FRANK Moore Colby is one of the great unrecorded facts of American literature. To remind the reputedly informed and discriminating segment of the American reading public that the year 1938 marked the thirteenth anniversary of his death is to run the risk of being taken for a perpetrator of literary hoaxes. And to chastise this segment for its failure to accord him a reception which to the end of time will probably be reserved for solipsistic short story writers, scavenging novelists, spread-eagle poets, solemn young critics, and old unhappy bulls mistaken for critics is to run the risk of disturbing his spirit's ironic calm. If it is true (and there is little evidence to the contrary) that America never went even quietly mad over the writings of Colby, it is equally true that Colby hardly had what could be called a crush on America. He was too realistic an observer of human nature to expend more of his innate kindliness on the American people than they deserved. He was, first and last, a just man; and justice is an attribute that foolish, aberrant humanity has never passionately placed above all others.

Out of due consideration for Colby, and out of charitable regard for the limitations of the "Modern" contemporary mind, most of our intellectuals should be made to feel that they are under no obligation or compulsion to read Colby, ever. Furthermore, in the matter of assessing responsibility for his shelving, most of these denizens of the flux are entirely in the clear. There are a number of persons, however, who are not. We have in mind certain members of an earlier generation of "liberators", such nursemaids of the New American literature as Huneker, Boyd, Cabell, and Mencken, all of whom accord the rather dubious honor of fatherhood to Mencken—without so much as an asterisk for Colby.

In a sense this is the kindest cut of all, for our New literature is not Colby's child, although he was on hand at the christening and acted as godfather on occasion. If in later years the offspring frequently went to the bad, got lost in blind alleys, and fell in with friends who used it for a whetstone or a meal ticket, Colby was not to blame. He not only intelligently championed but consistently exemplified both in his character and writings those qualities that will always be found in a literature that is sanely and vigorously genuine. As for Mr. Mencken, although we shall be a long time defaulting on our debt to him, we have a sad hunch that at some future date he will be remembered in no small degree as the man who forgot to mention Frank Moore Colby.

Once in a while, anyway, the literary journalists find themselves in sober, altogether respectable company. The academic workers among the still-sputtering ruins of whole areas of twentieth-century literature in American are disappointingly silent, too, on the subject of Colby. One could spend days going through the indices of manuals, syllabi, and histories of our literature without finding so much as a footnote reference to the man. Fred Lewis Pattee's *The New American Literature*, which is inclusive now and then to the point of triviality, does not mention him; and a recent five-volume anthology of readings in American literature does not include him. A few hundred college English teachers probably know his "In Darkest James" because it appears in several collections of essays for freshmen. Carl Van Doren's *Modern American Prose* has an emasculated version of Colby's "Confessions of a Gallomaniac". At his death the *New Republic* and the *Nation* commented editorially, while Philip Littell, Lee Wilson Dodd, and a few others wrote short appreciations. Several years later when *The Colby Essays* (edited by Clarence Day) were issued in two volumes, the critical reception, as critical receptions went at that time, was exceedingly quiet.

Today, when practically all of our long-established guides and commentators are feverishly cultivating the Squirm Pathetic, and All the Sad Young Critics are fast being done in either by the Marxian jitters or the neo-classic jakeleg, to come upon that incisive, clear-sighted instrument that was the mind of Frank Moore Colby is comparable to a sudden, wholly unexpected emergence from a dismal swamp into the blinding light of living day. Born

in 1865, he early achieved what scores of his better-known contemporaries never did achieve—maturity. If there was ever a period when sanity, intelligence, and critical insight were lacking in American literature, it was around 1900. These qualities Colby possessed in rich abundance; and what is even more incredible, he had the courage to exercise them unflinchingly, with a justness and sureness that take us straight back to Dean Swift. Before mentioning his three books (all of them out of print), and in lieu of a more detailed examination of his literary criticism which we have treated elsewhere, we shall quote a number of characteristic passages, most of them still buried in magazine files. With few exceptions these isolated fragments can stand by themselves. Although our problems were not precisely Colby's, and although the winds of doctrine that eddied through the first twenty-five years of the present century are blowing furiously in different directions today, it was Colby's good fortune (as well as ours) to be one of those minds found sooner or later in any generation that are endowed with the good sense and integrity so indispensable for seeing man and his cultural manifestations from a long-time, essentially unchanging point of vantage. We know of few American critics who in their practice have borne out so brilliantly, so unwaveringly, the truth of Walter Bagehot's ever-fruitful observations on the nature of pure art.

II

To insure Colby's comments on his contemporaries being taken by the reader in the same spirit in which they were made, the following passage from his review of a number of volumes of American essays published in 1904 should be quoted:

What you regard as my spiritual limitations, I will promptly defend as intentional abstinences Therein lies the essential futility of much book talk in a period of negative literature. Demand vivacity, and the writer thinks you want him to turn a handspring. Refer to style, and he thinks you are craving flashiness, preciosity and epigram, just the things he is trying to avoid. Current criticism is a fracas wherein we pelt each other with quarter-truths. Indeed, the chief stimulant of literary discussion is the conviction that if a man asserts some neglected fraction of a verity he intends some in-

dignity to the rest of it, so we hit him between the eyes with the aliquot parts. Hence, if we say that we miss color, it will be inferred that we admire the style whose every sentence wears a red necktie, and if we say "form" we are knocked flat with "substance," and as to complaining of any lack of individuality, there will be no doubt whatever that we mean bumpiousness and ignorant self-display.

Of the numerous authors reviewed, most of whom were dedicating their talents to that "literature of the helping hand", Mr. H. W. Boynton was a refreshing exception. Boynton, said Colby, was writing for equals, and was comparatively free from "our national literary vice of giving a verbal push to the things that go without saying."

Colby frequently paid his respects to the talents of William Dean Howells and Henry James, whom he rightly considered the only American novelists of their period worth bothering with. But no critic was more acutely aware of their shortcomings, nor less inclined to keep tactfully mum about them. Colby had long noted with amusement the anomalous figure of James, who for years had been more or less subtly flouting the moral proprieties in his novels, but had always managed to keep out of jail. And that, thought Colby, in a literature so well policed as ours was surely something. According to Mrs. Wharton, one of Colby's articles on James had a very distressing effect on the Master. "I shall never forget the misery, the mortification even, which tried to conceal itself behind an air of offended dignity. His ever-bubbling sense of fun failed him completely."

In 1902 Colby said of James:

. . . His world was small, but it was credible—humanity seen through a sieve, but still humanity . . . For years James has not made one shadow-casting character. His love affairs, illicit though they be, are so stripped to their motives that they seem no more enticing than a diagram. A wraith proves faithless to her marriage vow, elopes with a bogie in a cloud of words. Six phantoms meet and dine, three male, three female, with two thoughts a piece, and, after elaborate geometry of the heart, adultery follows like a Q.E.D.

And in 1914 Colby had the following to say of him:

This and many other pages of his later books read like very

awkward draughts, mere dragnets of material. They throw insignificant processes of mind out of perspective, and include details the mere mention of which misleads by a sense of importance. He flattens himself like a woodtick in the mental tissues of his characters and can give you no idea of what in general their minds are like. His characters resemble one another because they are all pulverized, and one hour of their lives seems as good as another. And the sense of finesse we gain from it is, I believe, quite often an illusion . . . With Henry James we have a sense of getting into people too far—not into their spirits, but into their brain cells—and we feel rather like a bacillus. That is why I think even the warmest admirer of Henry James must have at times a coarse hankering for exteriors, a sort of homesickness for legs and arms . . . He takes a strictly personal and private view of the functions of a sentence. He does not regard a sentence as a convenient and, if possible, a grammatical means of conveying a thought from one mind to another. He regards it primarily as a trunk to pack with his own intellectual belongings.

What Colby might have been provoked to by a reading of Glenway Wescott's blob on James in the *Hound & Horn* several years ago would have made a morsel fit only for the gods of literary criticism.

The loudly touted literary giants of Europe, who so handily strongarmed most of the important critics of our time into tame submission, were taken in stride by Colby. Not one of them was sufficiently impressive to induce critical buck fever; and even in the cases of authors who commanded his respect, there was never any relaxing of his critical intelligence nor any blurring of his fine sense for the emotional decencies. Santayana has defined intelligence as quickness in seeing things as they are. Colby *was* that definition. It is easy enough for critics coming along twenty or thirty years after the events to place men like George Bernard Shaw. As early as 1900 or before, when Shaw was daily reversing the natural order of all things under the heavens as a matter of reflex action, and gleefully ravaging the nervous systems of friends as well as enemies, Colby could be found sitting a little to one side, laughing mildly. Right from the first he insisted that it was a mistake to take Shaw seriously. Colby was fully appreciative of his Playboy side, but repeatedly shot the Prophet myth full of neat little holes. To those who may have missed it, we recommend

Colby's timeless demolition of Shaw in 1908, reprinted in the *Bookman* for January, 1933. In 1914 Colby peppered "Poor Yorick" in this wise:

With Shaw the scandalization of respectability often becomes a restrictive routine quite at variance with his own theories of soul-expression. Shaw's young people seem never to know what they want till somebody tells them what they ought not to have. They are not free; they are the slaves of eternal contrariety . . . Nearly half of the present volume [*Misalliance*, etc.] is taken up with a charming and altogether unscrupulous treatise on "Parents and Children," which anyone who is inclined to believe in Shaw's "philosophy" ought to read in order to rid himself forever of the notion that Shaw has a single philosophic fiber in his composition. It is a masterpiece of eloquent unqualified assertion in matters of which no honest man, capable of self-analysis, could feel at all certain. He curses his own schooling, says it taught him nothing whatever, and thinks if he could have been free of it and developed in his own way it would have been much better. But how can he judge of that? Had he turned out more Shavian than he now is, society would probably have hanged him.

III

Colby's first volume, *Imaginary Obligations*, was published in 1904. It easily contained enough critical dynamite to blow our ailing American literature and our bloated American life thirty years into the future. (He once noted the surprising harmlessness of first-rate satire when it bursts upon the world.) *Imaginary Obligations*, because of its subject matter, does not deserve a place beside the supremely great satires. Moreover, it is without benefit of fictional icing. But if there is one book in our literature (with the exception of *The Education of Henry Adams*) that approaches satirical eminence, it is *Imaginary Obligations*, truly an American *The Praise of Folly*. At a time when men like H. W. Mabie were in the critical saddle, when our typical playwrights, novelists, poets, and essayists were about the last word in dishwater, and when books like *Literature and the American College* made little or no impression upon the American consciousness, it was to be expected that Colby's reception would be a cold one. His highly concentrated criticism of the still hallowed, if considerably deflated,

bigwigs of his time constitutes one of their few legitimately literary reasons for being. It is not altogether the result of chance oversight that he is remembered, when at all, as a professor of History and Economics at several Eastern universities and as an editor for many years of encyclopedias and yearbooks.

Imaginary Obligations is divided into eight general sections, and in a prose which for pungency, concision, and "personal accuracy" compares most strikingly with Swift's, Colby surveyed what is so wearisomely referred to as the "American Scene" in a manner which, we feel sure, would have been wholly gratifying to Henry David Thoreau. It is the sort of book that could serve to remind civilized readers of their honorable dependency upon such organizations as the *Modern Library*.

In the section, "On Literary Compulsion", Colby disposed once and for all of those poor devils who go through their literary lives cowering under the tyranny of compulsory reading lists compiled as a rule by the half-educated. The essay on Kipling is probably the most sensible piece on its subject ever written. In an essay on the literary temperament, Colby remarked that sometimes "after a brilliant literary meeting where authors read their papers our heart goes out to the simple and spontaneous, natural and single-minded cow who never flourishes her tail for our sakes, but to remove from her actual haunches an authenticated fly." In "The Crowded Forum" Colby handled in timeless fashion such ever-timely subjects as the asperities of peacemaking, democratic gentility, nervous patriotism, and stupid Americanism. Concerning the public adulation of heroes, he said:

The small poets begin on him immediately, and the air is soon buzzing with little odes. He shakes off the small poet at first with some annoyance. When an unspoiled warrior is put for the first time into minor verse he hates it. It makes him feel like a pressed pansy. No living man is a fit subject for poetry, and as soon as he feels at home in it that is the end of him.

A rather damaging statement, especially so when one thinks of the large number of dedicatory washings taken in by contemporary poets. In "Rigours of Education" Colby said in six short papers just about all that, in a fundamental sense, has even at any time needed to be said—with this important difference: he didn't say

it through the nose. The ten papers gathered under "The Business of Writing", including the one on running an oracle, which Walter Lippmann so fondly cherishes, are also neatly definitive. But the most delicious, the most suavely annihilating, the most brilliantly witty (and, incidentally, the truest) commentary on the American drama of the 1900s is that section of *Imaginary Obligations* titled "Adventures of a Playgoer". If there is anything in *Dramatic Opinions and Essays* or *Around Theatres* that surpasses it, then we have read all three men very badly. By comparison, George Jean Nathan, say, seems so very sophomoric and junky—even more so, perhaps, than he really is. Why something from Colby is not to be found in the recent *The American Theatre as Seen by Its Critics* is for others to say.

Colby's next volume, *Constrained Attitudes* (1910), fared little better at the hands of critics and readers although it contained the same tonic brands of irony, truth, and wit. He dealt in this book with such subjects as "Impatient 'Culture' and the Literal Mind", "The Humdrum of Revolt", "Literary Class Distinctions", and "International Impressionism". One of the essays, "The Art of Disparagement", is probably the most amusing and spirited grammar of literary insult that has ever been written.

In 1921 appeared Colby's third and last volume, *The Margin of Hesitation*. All of the nineteen pieces reveal Colby at his stylistic best and are informed with characteristic sharpness and bite; but a few are not as satisfying as most of the earlier ones, probably because he was becoming a little tired and tended to repetition, more probably because of the too topical nature of some of his themes. An amply rewarding number of these later papers, however, are pure, unfatigued Colby. "Thinking It Through in Haste" makes just about every antecedent treatment of the subject seem a little flabby, and every subsequent one a little superfluous. "Vast numbers of contemporary humanitarian writers," he observed, "never rise above this level to which he [H. G. Wells] sometimes descends. Moreover this body of writing which has obviously not taken the trouble even to catch up with the past is admired on the singular ground that it has overtaken the future. It is the journalism of prematurity." Colby was sure that there were more interesting objects of worship than the middle of next week. "Lit-

erature," he concluded, "does not stay behind with progress; it moves along with experience."

In "The Lessons of Literary War Losses" he cauterized prominent English and European writers for their lapsing into utter barbarism and insanity during the World War. "While lives are nobly lost at the front," wrote Colby, "wits are lost as nobly in the magazines, and after a battle there are almost as many miscarriages among verse writers as among mothers." Two other essays, "Trolley Cars and Democratic Raptures" and "After the War in Thompsonstown", cover with mordant dispatch and unsparing penetration the ground that Sinclair Lewis plodded over in *Main Street* and *Babbitt*. Furthermore, these two pieces, together with a merciless composite portrait or "character" of the typical American novelist, "On Behalf of Harold McChamber", do for Lewis what he lacks either the courage or the sense of humor to do for himself.

With reviewing and advertising columns becoming once again practically indistinguishable, we know of nothing more timely—and final—than Colby's "Reviewer's Cramp". The iron law of reviewing, declared Colby, ordains that it shall be "the perpetual announcement of differences that are not perceived and of astonishments for good or evil that are not experienced, and that it shall be accompanied by a constrained silence as to the sense of monotony that undoubtedly always pervades the reviewer's bosom."

The last essay, "Our Refinement", is in many respects the masterpiece of *The Margin of Hesitation*. With becoming brevity and unerring shrewdness he shattered, among other inadequately supported explanations for our cultural backwardness, the "cultural-mulch" theory, the one so central and so precious to certain critical schools. The essay ends with these words:

Acquaintance with the personalities of cultured groups naturally disposes a sensitive mind to the cultivation of an appearance of illiteracy. Thought is not a social nuisance in this country, but thinkers generally are. Hence, when seized by an irresistible impulse to express any sort of an idea, a well-bred man will always leave the room, just as he would if seized by an uncontrollable fit of coughing.

IV

In closing, we should like to enumerate very briefly a few of the more obvious reasons for Colby's neglect by that part of the American reading public that is given credit, at least, for seldom confusing an insatiable appetite for the significant fiction of last week with a taste for literature.

To begin with, Colby was honest; and honesty, functioning in conjunction with a brand of intelligence rarely encountered in this country, is never appreciated at close range. Men like Colby make their best friends posthumously. He gave his contemporaries their entire due. He judged them, understood them; he didn't react, whoop it up, lay low, or burble. He consistently stood off a few paces from his subjects and saw them at the moment in the same sharp perspective that critics of a later time manage to achieve with so little effort or risk. Posterity has not always been so fortunate in its advance agents. Colby once said of Professor Raleigh that he, like Coleridge and Hazlitt, belonged to "the class of men who would have discovered Shakespeare even if they had lived in Shakespeare's time." Colby was of their company.

Colby never catered to the public. He wrote only when he had something to say, and he said it in a prose that for rigorous economy and lean, masculine intensity has in all likelihood never been surpassed by an American writer. His medium was neither blustering overstatement nor fastidiously cultivated understatement; it was simply statement, stripped of all verbal excess; in short, a luminous, highly charged prose style. He thoroughly hated fuzziness and redundancy. Sweeping generalizations and wholesale indictments he could not tolerate.

He had no illusions about human nature—past, present, or future. In reviewing Mrs. Wharton's *The Custom of the Country*, the characters of which a great many other reviewers of the book felt had been treated in downright cruel, altogether unsympathetic fashion, Colby said:

Surely it is permissible to survey a few groups of miscellaneous New-Yorkers in a spirit, say, of cool inquiry, without yearning to clasp a single member of them to one's bosom. It does not seem to me that this is cynicism. It seems rather a measure of mental hygiene.

Colby thought it only luck, when you considered the typical native, that New York was ruled by Charles H. Murphy and not Adbul Aziz or Muley Hafid. "It is not through any merits of their own," said Colby, "that so few New-Yorkers are beheaded or sold as slaves."

Not even Swift was more keenly aware of the pathetic, occasionally tragic, incongruity between men as they are and as they ought to be. But Colby never allowed the sorry spectacle to turn contemplation into bitterness. Although the idea of putting the business of millennium-greeting on a fortnightly basis never appealed to him, the unceasing labors and incorrigible optimism of our twentieth-century tidy-men did serve to make his way through this life jollier and more bearable. Their amazing oversimplifications were partial compensation at least for the largely ineradicable ills of a plan-ridden world.

Unlike hordes of American critics who have gained reputations for fearlessness and rugged iconoclasm on the strength of nothing more substantial than a piercing insight into the vagaries of Rotary, Colby, when he could be coaxed out of the house, was far above blazing away with both barrels at rabbits *acouchant*. He preferred to stalk lions, and without exception he brought them down with a few well-directed shots. It seems that he most deftly put his fellow-contributors to *Civilization in the United States* very much in their places without their even knowing it.

Colby so loved the first rate, the genuine, regardless of its setting in time or place, that its championing by the pedantic, the pretentious, and the incompetent drew his most withering fire. If one wishes to see the dangers inherent in a too-dogged, unfeeling, unthinking adherence to tradition—an adherence that fails miserably to measure up to its object of worship, and an adherence that is distinguished more for its easy comfort than for its virtues and heroisms, one has only to turn back to that dreariest of genteel periods, the 1900s in America. "When a young American writer seems mad," said Colby, "it is usually because an old one drives him almost crazy."

Colby never deified facts, and that heresy alone is enough to damn him in the eyes of thousands of college-bred readers. As far as he was concerned there was nothing stubborn about a fact.

"It is a time-server and a lick-spittle and whenever it meets a fool it is ready to lay down its life for him." And if there was anyone fully qualified to speak on this matter, it was Colby. He did not edit encyclopedias and year books the greater part of his life for nothing. It naturally annoyed him to find so much raw *Reader's Guide* material trying (and all too often succeeding, as it always will) to palm itself off as vital literature.

Carl Van Doren once lamented the fact that Colby had made no "passionate guesses" at truth and beauty, and concluded that by reason of this failure (or abstinence) Colby had just missed greatness. The charge has point; but it is more than likely that the laws governing the economy of over-abundance should continue to be applied to passionate guessers rather than to men like Colby who consider the matter of guess-work, passionate or otherwise, as a problem best entrusted to specialists.

Colby was a man of principle rather than of party, which, again, leaves him just nowhere today. No one, we are sure, not even the late Irving Babbitt, cared less for Rousseauism than Colby; but he felt that certain of life's most precious values inevitably suffered indignities at the hands of organizations and institutions composed of persons with the best intentions in the world. The nature of his distaste for clubs, cliques, and academies of this and that is, as usual, best indicated in his own words:

We always carry out by committee anything in which anyone of us alone would be too reasonable to persist. Alone, after a few trials, one would probably come to his senses, but in a committee we come to one another's senses, which is merely a convivial manner of going out of our own.

Colby did not have a horror of standards, but only of corporate bodies that were determined to tell him what they were. He was of the opinion that to the existing chaos of public taste these bodies succeeded only in adding an element of pomposity, "leaving the chaos just where it was." He noted that "strange creatures sift into any club . . . There is always," he said (anticipating Mrs. Parker), "a certain number of club members who have bred from eggs laid in the walls or under the carpets; it is impossible that any one should have let them in on purpose."

Even more revealing of Colby's horror of factions and parties

is the following statement, made in 1914, but never timelier than now:

. . . It was plain even then [at the time of M. Millerand's entrance into the French Cabinet] that pure Socialist theory had been terribly ravaged by common sense—Socialism, in fact, had long since become a mere mundane business . . . It was absurd that a man should try to take his Marxism into office, for the chances were ten to one that as an officeholder he would soon cease to yearn for the "revolution" which, as a Marxist, it was his duty to do. Yearning for one's own overthrow is uphill work . . . Marx was, after all, a prophet in the older sense, a great spiritual leader, an inspirer of men. We have only to contrast him with the social soothsayers of our own time to realize it . . . The Marxian prophetic example may have been bad for these lesser breeds of the present day, but of one thing we may be certain: If he were living today he would not by any chance be a Marxist, for in that case he would not be bearing the same intellectual ratio to the men and things of his time.

Another factor that helps to account for Colby's not being remembered today was the absence of even a trace of vulgarity in his makeup—a lack that will ever work to the disadvantage of those who so frequently deserve the recognition during their lifetimes that they never receive. When we have said this of Colby, we trust we have fully shown by quotation that he was equally free from any imputation of toploftiness. His egotism was of the most honorable kind, and if there was anything that he loathed more than base subservience, it was inordinate pride.

And last, no one has yet written his biography, while he, characteristically enough, forgot to write it himself. The American reading public has always been a great deal more interested in *Lives* than in *Works*. The sure-fire formula calls for a sensational, at least colorful or unusual, life *and* important contributions to literature—creative, of course. But if both are out of the question, then most of the attention should be given to the Life. In Colby's case the stress was reversed, with the expected result.

If and when Colby is done at full-length, Santayana's remarks

on the inconsequential nature of the "life" details should be duly kept in mind by his biographer. All that is essential of Frank Moore Colby is to be found in his quantitatively slight body of writing. What a pity it is that this observation holds for so few American writers!

by Dwight Durling

TERRA INCOGNITA

Early a mariner, of devious moods,
And studious cosmographer, the mind
Charts his meridians and latitudes,
His tropics, regions of calm, intent to find
Some beaten passage east or westerly,
Threading the stars as night ascends her tower,
Leading him out to islands of destiny
Infallibly his upon his natal hour.

These islands of the soul no voyager
Casts anchor in by chart-and-compass wit.
Seacoasts of his surmise lie yet nowhere—
Nameless in navigator's log or writ.
By erosions and deposits, seed wind-sown,
And coral-slow accretions rise his own.

by Lodwick Hartley

OF TIME AND MRS. WOOLF

FOR about two decades Virginia Woolf has been a test of taste. Among discriminating people failure to appreciate her has been tantamount to admitting, if not outright Philistinism, at least immature preceptibility. Her career as a novelist has been quietly amazing. Like a true daughter of Sir Leslie Stephen, she has always thought for herself. Yet she has been able to break with tradition and follow some of the most revolutionary developments of the novel without manifesting any of the violence of James Joyce and D. B. Wyndham Lewis or any of the specious experimentation of Gertrude Stein. *Mrs. Dalloway* stands with *Ulysses* as one of the most distinguished examples of the stream-of-consciousness technique. *The Waves* is as original in its plan as *Work in Progress*, although it is neither so confusing nor so cloacal.

The story of Mrs. Woolf's artistic development is rather well known. *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day* showed little tendency to break with the established tradition of the Edwardian novel. *Jacob's Room* (1922) offered a new departure in its presentation of a central character largely through the reactions of people outside himself. *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) is a record of the cerebration of the heroine on the day of her memorable party. *To the Lighthouse* (1927) makes a change of tack. Instead of showing how many lives influence one character, it deals with the influence of one character on several lives. Against a symbolic back-drop of sea and sky, *The Waves* (1931) presents six characters entirely through soliloquies, without actual dialogue, without description or the recording of events.

Although it would be foolhardy to predict Mrs. Woolf's future development, it seems reasonable to regard her most recent novel, *The Years*¹, as a culmination of her art. It is a mature and subtle

¹*The Years*. By Virginia Woolf. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 1937. Pp. 435. \$2.50.

product, the distinction of whose method lies in its borrowing both from the traditional and the new in novel technique. Parts of the book are as objective as any Victorian or Edwardian novel; other parts make skillful use of the methods evolved in Mrs. Woolf's preceding novels. The fact that the book presents the Pargiters, an upper middle-class family, through the years from 1880 to the present day inevitably suggests a comparison with the popular chronicle novels of such writers as Galsworthy, Walpole, and Susan Ertz. However, *The Years* owes little to the chronological novel. The history of the Pargiters is not told in terms of events or action, but in terms of the characters themselves. Hence, Mrs. Woolf again chooses to be amorphous in structure, selecting her scenes at random and treating her characters with an ineffable combination of deliberation and casualness.

The title of the book suggests both its plan and its philosophy. If Fate is the real protagonist of most of Hardy's novels, Time—conceived of as more gentle, but a scarcely less immutable force—is again the most important element in a novel of Mrs. Woolf. It moulds and changes life, but never violently. Even death comes without a jar; and finally the years weave over the whole scene a veil of peace and serenity.

The Years opens at the tea hour in the Pargiter house, Abercorn Terrace, London. The time is 1880. The family drop in with all the casualness of life: the Colonel from a visit to his mistress, Eleanor from her philanthropic work, Morris from his law office. In the foreground is a teakettle that refuses to function properly and in the background is a valetudinarian mother whose ever slender and ever tenacious hold on life has set the nerves of the family on edge. As the years roll by, the lives of the Pargiters are moulded and shaped. Rose, who as a child indecorously chased cats in the alley, breaks windows in the interest of woman suffrage; Morris pursues a career of mediocrity at the bar; Edward, mastering a disappointment in love, becomes a distinguished Oxford don; Delia becomes a clever hostess; Eleanor stays at home to look after her father and finally becomes a beloved maiden aunt whose interest in life and in her family never flags. External events—the things that crowd the history books dealing with the years between 1880 and 1937—have no real place in the novel, although now and then their shadows may fall briefly across the characters.

Even the World War does not seriously disturb the calm progression of the book. Thus, paradoxically enough, a novel in which time is an extremely important element achieves a freedom from time.

II

Coming as a full-blown product of its author's maturity, *The Years* should provide some basis for the evaluation of her method. Mrs. Woolf's art is a pure art that has been attained through a somewhat dogged rigidity of purpose. She has rejected the sentimentality and the moralizing of the Victorians, as well as the social propagandizing of her contemporaries. "I believe that all novels . . . deal with character," she wrote in "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown", one of her finest critical essays, "and that it is to express character—not to preach doctrines, sing songs, or celebrate the glories of the British Empire, that the form of the novel . . . has been evolved." Emphasis on characterization has, of course, always been the basis of realistic fiction; but Mrs. Woolf goes beyond the traditional emphasis. Her characters are rarely objective in the sense of the psychological case-history or the painted canvas. Her theory of characterization—subtle, fresh, and poetic though it assuredly is—prescribes very definite bounds, in spite of its seeming limitlessness. Bernard speaks for Mrs. Woolf in the epilogue to *The Waves*: "I am not one person; I am many people; I do not know who I am—Jimmy, Susan, Neville, Rhoda, or Louis: or how to distinguish my life from theirs." Therefore, in *The Waves*, we are to assume, it is in the merging of the six characters, not in the individual figures that one finds the pattern of life itself, the Everyman. The same idea may be used as the defense of the general tendency of Mrs. Woolf's characters to merge into the pattern of life in which we find them. The idea is so striking that it is likely to make a rapid conquest of one's credence. But away from Mrs. Woolf's spell one may find cause to wonder whether this annihilation of the microcosm, this achievement of Nirvana, is not both specious and precious. Admitting that it does throw light on a phase of human experience, one will probably find that as a device of characterization it has its disadvantages. Mrs. Woolf's characters, for all their charm, have a way of staying on the surface of one's consciousness; they never eat their way

into the very fiber of one's being as great literary characters have a way of doing. Jacob, Mrs. Dalloway, Mrs. Ramsay, and Eleanor Pargiter are not made of quite the same stuff that went into Stephen Dedalus, Isabel Archer, Mrs. Morel, Mrs. Forrester, and Eugene Gant.

The central philosophical problem of Mrs. Woolf's characters is the search for the meaning of life. "What is the meaning of life?" asks Lily Briscoe in *To the Lighthouse*. "Where am I going?" echoes Eleanor Pargiter in *The Years*. Indeed, the problem is important enough, but Mrs. Woolf makes no attempt to answer with any degree of assurance. "Perhaps the great revelation never did come," she wrote in *To the Lighthouse*. "Instead there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark; here was one. This, that and the other; herself and Charles Tansley and the breaking wave; Mrs. Ramsay bringing them together; Mrs. Ramsay saying, 'Life stand still here'; Mrs. Ramsay making of the moment something permanent—this was of the nature of a revelation." The only stability, Mrs. Woolf leads us to believe, is the continuity of life. This, obviously, is only another way of saying that only change is changeless. Shorn of the rich imagery and faultless style with which she skillfully dresses it, Mrs. Woolf's philosophy seems to run in this manner: Where are we going? We don't know; but we are going, and that is something. Admittedly, I am handling Mrs. Woolf a little roughly here, but I am merely trying to discover whether her thinking represents patisserie or meat, whether it should not better be served as a delicacy for the tea table than as the entrée for the evening meal.

But perhaps it is the part of Philistinism to blame Mrs. Woolf because she presents no challenging philosophy and to point out that, stripped of their subtlety of presentation, her conclusions are commonplace. Perhaps we have no right to demand of the artist affirmation or negation. It would be too bad to clutter up literature with Leith Walks and Everlasting Yeas. It may require no more real mental effort to arrive at a fatalism like Hardy's than it does to admit that life is an enigma. But in the novel, it seems to me, the conclusions themselves are not the thing. What really matters is the vitality that the work of art gets through the struggle of the author or of the characters toward a conclusion of

some sort. The element of struggle is not entirely absent from Mrs. Woolf's novels, but it is made subliminal. Presented through overtones, implications, and suggestions, it is hardly central enough to give a vitality of its own. A revelatory comparison may be made of Mrs. Woolf and another novelist of almost identical surname who is concerned with the problem of time and the continuity of life. Thomas Wolfe gains his force not only through a sense of continuity but from life itself, the burning vital experience, and the inner drive that makes his central character struggle to compass all experience.

The structure of Mrs. Woolf's novels (or what may seem to be their lack of it) arises with perfect logic out of her philosophy. If there is no answer to the question of the meaning of life and if the only stability is the progression of life, then one has no reason to conceive of a pattern that involves anything other than some sort of continuity, growth, and change; and the art of the novel may involve selection but not a great deal of arrangement of material. Again, we revert to Bernard and the epilogue to *The Waves*:

How tired I am of stories; how tired I am of phrases that come down beautifully with all their feet on the ground. Also, how I distrust neat designs of life upon half sheets of note-paper. I begin to long for some little language such as lovers use, broken words, inarticulate words, like the shuffling of feet on the pavement. I begin to seek some design in accordance with those moments of humiliation and triumph that come now and then undeniably. Lying in a ditch on a stormy day, when it has been raining, then enormous clouds come marching over the sky, tattered clouds, wisps of cloud. What delights me then is the confusion, the height, and movement; something sulphurous and sinister, bowled up, helter-skelter, towering, trailing, broken off, lost, and I forgotten, minute, in a ditch. Of story, of design I do not see a trace then.

No one can doubt that Bernard has summed up with remarkable eloquence Mrs. Woolf's contribution to the new conception of the novel. The obvious question—and it is one that may lead to no end of difficulty—is whether the highest function of art is to conform to the seeming patternlessness of life or to find some kind of design in the midst of chaos. Human experience, it seems, has in general demanded some kind of pattern, else philosophy and religion would have no exciting history. Philosophic and artistic

anarchism or nihilism always has and doubtless always will have a place, but probably as a "little language"—lighting up an aspect of experience, yet failing to satisfy the thirst of the human soul for design and pattern. Of the "little language" Mrs. Woolf's mastery is well assured. Few have presented more truly the wonder of life's minutiae, and few have been more keenly conscious of the fact that significant moments of life often attach themselves inexplicably to insignificant things that have meaning only to the mind possessing the original code book.

It is almost useless to praise Mrs. Woolf for her style. In an age in which the fashion has been to suppose that language must be twisted and bent before it can become a fit medium of expression, she has had profound respect for the integrity of the tongue and has been able to show its remarkable beauty and flexibility. At times she commands the precision of Henry James without his suggestion of stiffness. Often her prose has the feeling and inspiration of poetry. Frequently she attains the poet's sudden and miraculous insight into the mystery of things. *The Years*, like most of her other novels, is studded with gems of verbal loveliness. One may almost open the book at random and run upon a passage like the following.

It was raining. A fine rain, a gentle rain, was peppering the pavements and making them greasy Where it fell on earth, on fields and gardens, it drew up the smell of earth. Here a drop poised on a grass-blade; there filled the cup of a wild flower, till the breeze stirred and the rain was spilt. Was it worth while to shelter under the hawthorn, under the hedge, the sheep seemed to question; and the cows, already turned out in the grey fields, under the dim hedges, munched on, sleepily chewing with raindrops on their hides. Down on the roofs it fell—here in Westminster, there in the Ladbroke Grove; on the wide sea a million points pricked the blue monster like an innumerable shower bath. Over the vast domes, the soaring spires of slumbering University cities, over the leaded libraries, and the museums, now shrouded in brown holland, the gentle rain slid down, till, reaching the mouths of those fantastic laughers, the many-clawed gargoyles, it splayed out in a thousand odd indentations . . . And the wallowing Oxford bells, turning over and over like slow porpoises in a sea of oil, contemplatively intoned their musical incantations.

This is child's play for Mrs. Woolf. She can repeat her remarkable performance again and again without effort.

Our final quarrel with Mrs. Woolf should not be for what she has accomplished, but what she has failed to accomplish. Few writers have had such an embarrassment of riches both in background and in natural endowment. Few writers have ever accomplished so splendidly the consummate mastery of the techniques of their art. In the subtle shades of character analysis her only peer is Katherine Mansfield. She is unexcelled in creating a delicious sense of life and the continuity of life. But her reach does not exceed her grasp. If Mrs. Woolf's novels miss greatness, the reason may be that her art is too exquisite and self-contained and that it dangerously approaches death of an excess of perfection. It performs flawlessly what it sets out to do, but it does not attempt to do enough for real greatness. The broad canvas of life is patently no concern of Mrs. Woolf. The richness of her imagery tends to camouflage the essential bareness of her range. Although her field is the human consciousness, it is limited to the memory of people who have lived upper middle-class lives, reflecting and brooding, remembering scraps of songs, poems, and experiences, drinking tea and walking in Hyde Park. It is true that a novelist like Jane Austen achieved undoubted greatness within a range that was certainly not more expansive; but Miss Austen, with all her subtle perfection within narrow bounds, belongs more to the earth than Mrs. Woolf does. She had a finer gift of objective characterization, a surer emphasis on design, and a sense of humor. She was first of all a critic of life, not a poetess singing in an ivory tower the beautiful unaccountability of human existence. Mrs. Woolf has brought new poetry to the novel, but she has ruled out too much of sentimentality and passion, too much of bitterness and humor, too much of imperfection and pattern.

by William S. Knickerbocker

SUET WITH NO PLUMS

RESTORING THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

"But we are not sure that the book is not in some degree open to the charge which the idle citizen in the Spectator brought against his pudding: 'Mem. too many plums and no suet.'"

—MACAULAY: essay on Sir James Mackintosh

MACAULAY, the interpreter and apologist of the Whig triumph of 1832, had a lively presentiment of what would happen to the reputation of his generation and to his own literary achievement:

It will be no gross injustice to our grandchildren to talk of us with contempt because they have surpassed us. . . As we have our descendants to judge us, so ought we to judge our fathers. In order to form a correct estimate of their merits, we ought to place ourselves in their situation, to put out of our minds, for a time, all that knowledge which they, however eager in the pursuit of truth, could not have, and which we, however negligent we may have been, could not help having. . . . But it is too much that the benefactors of mankind, after having been reviled by the dunces of their own generation for going too far, should be reviled by the dunces of the next generation for not going far enough.¹

Was Matthew Arnold in the state of mind of that "idle citizen in the Spectator" who complained of his pudding when, in the essay on "Joubert", Arnold attempted to sap Macaulay's popularity by dubbing him "great apostle of the Philistines"? "Lord Macaulay," wrote Arnold, "was

a born rhetorician; a splendid rhetorician doubtless, and, beyond that, an *English* rhetorician also, an *honest* rhetorician: still, beyond the apparent rhetorical truth of things he never could penetrate. . . therefore, his reputation, brilliant as it is, is not secure. . . . As Lord Macaulay's own genera-

¹Macaulay: *Critical and Historical Essays*, III, p. 302.

tion dies out, as a new generation arrives, without those ideas of its predecessor which Lord Macaulay so deeply shared and so happily satisfied, will he give the same pleasure? and, if he ceases to give this, has he enough of light in him to make him last? . . . Will Macaulay be saved, in the sweep and pressure of time, for his light's sake. . . ? I think it is very doubtful.

The unsuspecting reader, unacquainted with Arnold's ingenious critical strategy, would not normally suppose that the entire "Joubert" essay was a skilfully devised and disguised attack on Macaulay's influence. Directly and openly to attack Macaulay would have been a plain invitation for counter-attack by Macaulay's admirers and defenders and probably would have resulted in deepening their attachment and extending that influence but Arnold's youthful cleverness had by that time mellowed and matured, perhaps aided by the effects of Newman's "doctrine of the economy in the dispensation of truth", and had developed into various subtle devices which tactfully were directed towards converting middle class taste. Yet it did not succeed in this instance nor has Arnold's prophesy (probably caused by his wishful thinking) been fulfilled. Macaulay is still a favorite author for various reasons.

Only thirteen years after Arnold's oblique manoeuvring, his friend John Morley wrote his famous essay on "Macaulay" (1876) which was occasioned by the imminent publication of G. O. Trevelyan's biography of his uncle and attempted to correct Arnold's unjust treatment by noting that "Macaulay has been prized less as a historian proper than as a master of literary art." Though Morley's essay was acute in suggesting reasons for Macaulay's popularity, though it was discriminating, temperate, and just, it signally failed to indicate Macaulay's worth as an historian. Though it is the most satisfactory analysis and interpretation of Macaulay accessible, it is not permanently acceptable as the final word on Macaulay because Morley made the egregious error of accusing Macaulay for lacking what Morley himself so keenly felt: the sense of impending doom. Closing with words that strongly remind one of Arnold's concluding paragraphs of "Joubert", Morley said:

Now a man of letters, in an age of battle and transition

like our own, fades into an ever deepening distance, unless he has, while he writes, that touching and impressive quality, —the presentiment of the eve: a feeling of the difficulties and interests that will engage and distract mankind on the morrow.

How similar is this to Carlyle's impatient snort that Macaulay saw "history with spectacles, not with his eyes"! But the indictment fails.

Perhaps Macaulay *was* destitute of a sense of "presentiment", yet one wonders? As early as September, 1828, Macaulay wrote, in a review of Hallam's *History*, his own "presentiment", and even anticipated Morley in using the word itself!

"Already we seem to ourselves," wrote Macaulay, "to perceive the signs of unquiet times, the vague presentiment of something great and strange which pervades the community, the restless and turbid hopes of those who have everything to gain, the dimly hinted forebodings of those who have everything to lose. Many indications might be mentioned, in themselves indeed as insignificant as straws; but even the direction of a straw. . . will show from what quarter the storm is setting in."²

II

Macaulay's significance lies partly in his art and partly in his theory of history. His achievement may be adequately estimated only by discovering the primary direction of his mind and by allowing for his occasional excursions as fugitive flights. Brilliant orator as he was while he was a member of Parliament and able administrator as he was as member of the Supreme Council of India, these activities secured him means of serving his own day and need not be stressed as particularly important today. His fifty-nine years were lived during a momentous readjustment of English political arrangements: during a period which saw the beginning of those economic agitations and distresses which now

²Compare Macaulay's statement with Arnold's: "Undoubtedly we are drawing on towards great changes; and for every nation the thing most needful is to discern clearly its own condition in order to know in what way it may best meet them. Openness and flexibility of mind are at such a time the first of virtues. . . to recognize a period of transformation when it comes, and to adapt themselves honestly and rationally to its laws, is perhaps the nearest approach to perfection of which men and nations are capable."

are so painfully evident. Though English thought rapidly changed during his most active and mature years—evidences of which may be seen in the simultaneous movements of Chartism, Tractarianism and anti-Corn Law protests—he was characteristically immune and largely obtuse to their ominous drift, having insulated himself by his self-elected function of being secretary of the triumphant middle-class. Actually, he was a virtuous gentleman of the Regency period who, living during the early years of Victoria's reign, carried over into the new era attitudes and proposals forged during the few years immediately preceding the enactment of the First Reform Bill. Lord Morley notably touched the distinguishing trait of Macaulay when he summarized him:

It is one of the first things to be said about Macaulay, that he was in exact accord with the common average sentiment of his day on every subject on which he spoke. His superiority was not of that highest kind which leads a man to march in thought on the outside of a crowd, watching them, sympathizing with them, hoping for them, but apart. Macaulay was one of the middle-class crowd in his heart, and only rose above it by splendid attainments and extraordinary gifts of expression. He had none of that ambition which inflames some minds of their neighbors; his ascendancy is due to literary pomp, not to fecundity of spirit. No one has ever surpassed him in the art of combining resolute and ostentatious common sense of a slightly coarse sort in choosing his point of view, with so considerable an appearance of dignity and elevation in setting forth and impressing it upon others.

Does Macaulay's popularity lie in his being so aptly the spokesman of the newly empowered middle-classes whose parliamentary triumph in 1832 at once so deeply impressed Macaulay with the dynamics of a "noiseless revolution" and at the same time indicated to him the necessity of his electing himself the fluent and rationalizing secretary of his own comfortable class? Does his popularity lie in his swift perception of the tendency towards redaction which was to characterize the thought and form of the Victorian era: the redaction, that is to say, of the romantic stress on "imagination" and the Augustan insistence of the pre-romantic period on "reason"? Perhaps with these musings on the causes of his popularity, a bright speculative sally conceivably might suggest that he appealed to a Bible-reading and Calvinistic generation because

he adroitly translated the idea of Divine Providence which shaped the destinies of men into its secular supplement of the inevitable rightness of human reason in moving towards perfection through the conditions of liberty and partisan factions: "perfection" being determined by the obvious and manifest signs of success and prosperity as unmistakable proofs of Divine approval. Or is there a simpler and less ingenious answer to the question: was his instant and immense popularity caused by his essays being so easy a cabinet of cultural gems, of quotation and allusion, of detachable aphorisms which comfort those who veer from the delays of analysis and reflection, who dart after plausible generalities which look like quick insights, who, having a mortal horror of anything remotely suggesting scepticism, fly to faith, benevolence, and optimism, as a bird to its mountain? How could so ample a writer escape instant and wide popularity who could reduce wisdom to such portable pills as this: "The true philosophical temperament may, we think, be described in four words, much hope, little faith: a disposition to believe that anything, however extraordinary, may be done: an indisposition to believe that anything extraordinary has been done." Macaulay's popularity may possibly be found there: in his optimistic paradoxes.

Mere collation of Macaulay's aphorisms and paradoxes, desirable as such a collation would be, would probably not in itself disclose much about the mind of Macaulay if they were merely culled from their contexts, systematically arranged, and solemnly expounded by some industrious but unimaginative researcher. When Macaulay is really studied in relation to his times, when his family and "nurtural" inheritance are scrutinized with an eye on his modifications of mind in his own responses and resistances to his own generation, his oracular rotundities expressed in his aphorisms and paradoxes would then probably disclose something new and strange. For all of his historical sense, he owed more to his Scottish Calvinistic inheritance than he realized. The mollifying effects of evangelical and humanitarian Anglicanism might dissipate his inherited nurture of Calvinistic Predestinarianism into an amiable and optimistic *philanthropism* which, though it did not absolutely displace the concept of Divine Foresight, probably provided him with his clue of reading history backwards from the

time-point of the success of the Whigs in the First Reform Bill and probably enabled him to discover that theory of compromise which was such a comfort to the vast legion of Victorians who read his works. He substituted for the Calvinistic transcendent omnipotence of Providence a much more flattering Arminian doctrine of justification by works: which is a more impressive way of saying simply that England's glory is a record of progress through an unending series of justifiable concessions to the inevitable when threatened catastrophes were averted, when strategic cohesions of warring partisans resulted in a temporary political calm only to result in swiftly subsequent repulsions which prepared the conditions for another political crisis. What plainly looks like an Homeric sweep of Olympian understanding in Macaulay's *Epic of Anglia* looks ominously like the mundane counterpart of the Hebraic cosmic historiography in the Pentateuch.

All this, of course, may make Macaulay a "Victorian Liberal" even though he himself would probably have lumped "liberals" and "radicals" in the same detestable category. Perhaps the moment has passed for the words "liberalism" and "liberal" to be rehabilitated: willful ideologists have given it the *coup de grace* without any too exact understanding of what it meant or means. Passionate political absolutists in their energetic ignorance have practically succeeded in making it mean "Laodiceanism": a passive and indulgent indifference to factional efforts, a lazy insouciance resulting, most likely, from vegetative appeasements. The Whiggism in which Macaulay believed had its exponents of benevolent philanthropism, thanks to Holland House *soirees*, but though Macaulay lived through the era when various powers within Whiggism itself—notably those represented by Cobden and Bright—caused a re-formulation of its basic philosophy and tactics, Macaulay was absent in far-away India and like "poor Jim Jay" of de la Mare's poem, "got caught fast in yesterday never heeding the way the wind was spent." By the time he returned (1838), the three significant movements which altered the Victorian cultural scene were reaching their zenith: the Tory rebirth in the Tractarian Movement (1833-1845); the Chartist agitation (1833-1848); and the Cobden-Bright campaign to lower the price of bread by abolishing the import tax on cereal grains. These and

other disruptions of the public calm proceeded to Macaulay's bewilderment after his return from India: he had derived his panacea for contentions in his "noiseless-revolution" theory of English history and confidently trusted to its efficacy as the young Queen ascended the throne and instituted a new dynasty. Nor is it to be held against him that he possessed a canny journalistic sense in dying the very year that Darwin's *Origin of Species* and Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* were published. It was sufficiently appropriate for him to have published the first two volumes of his most sustained treatment of his favorite theme—England's addiction to "noiseless revolutions"—in the very year of England's nearest approach to a violent revolution, 1848. In his ambitious *History of England* he wrote a profound "tract for the times", reminding those who were all for immediate precipitate violence how England had, since its "glorious Revolution" of 1688, progressed to prosperity by timely appeasements through the conditions of patience, liberty, reason, and constitutional legislation.

That significant *History of England* no longer enjoys the popularity it once had but it has qualities which should restore it from oblivion. Whether Karl Marx read it or not is a problem for scholars but Macaulay apparently anticipated Marx's much-quoted theory of history. Macaulay's *History of England* is consciously a class document: it interprets the history of modern England in terms of dialectical materialism. Macaulay and Marx, however at variance they might be concerning basic issues of capitalism and communism, held similar views about historical action. Both dispensed with the notion that history is shaped by great men: not even Marx was as lucid and as certain in his statement as Macaulay in dismissing Carlyle's "hero" fiction. Macaulay was a completely "class-conscious" man: *his* class was the prosperous and powerful *bourgeoisie* whose triumph, through what Macaulay piously believed was the result of the inevitable forces of history, issued in the Reform Bill of 1832. Frankly and confessedly a partisan of a class and its ideology, he justified the "advocative" theory of historiography in his famous essay on "History": "The practice of distorting narrative into a conformity with theory is a vice not so unfavorable as at first sight it may appear to the interests of political science."

III

With the publication of Mr. Richmond Croom Beatty's *Lord Macaulay: Victorian Liberal*, there are now nine biographies or biographical studies of the great sophomore. Except for the still standard *Life of Thomas Babington Macaulay*, by Sir G. O. Trevelyan, they advance our understanding very little and fail to enlighten our darkness. Though Mr. Beatty's picturesque and buoyant biography contains some hitherto-unpublished passages and paraphrases of Macaulay's unimportant diary it is far from matching the biographical quality of Mr. Beatty's two former biographies: *William Byrd of Westover* and *Bayard Taylor*. In his introduction, Mr. Beatty excites the eagerness of his reader by promising to interpret Macaulay in the terms of the sweep and pressure of the latter's generation which he fails to fulfill. It boldly announces an intention to rehabilitate the meaning of "Liberalism", but except for displaying the amiable and hard-working historian, it signally misses its mark, unless the satisfactions of material comforts and worldly success are the true signs of "Liberalism".

Old wives' tales reiterating amazing exploits of memory and reading in Macaulay's prodigious and precocious youth might be safely muted: they no longer amuse us. More illuminating comment might be made on his indebtedness to his Scottish ancestry and its legacy of Calvinistic nurture: the earnest benevolence and humanitarianism of his father: the environmental pressures of Clapham and Hannah More: the influence of the dons and undergraduates at Cambridge: and where and how it was that he resisted contemporary suctions of a day given to temperamental seepages or explosions of egoism which are still sanctified by the pious label of "romanticism". The question might also be answered, how and to whom was he indebted for his tenacious clinging to the ideals of the eighteenth century, their fascination to him when it was fashionable to discard every shred of affection for the men, movements, and manners of that undying century. And then, of course, the effect of his contacts with the circle which comprised the *Edinburgh Review*. Revelations of his mind are available in essays in *Knight's*

**LORD MACAULAY: VICTORIAN LIBERAL*. by Richmond Croom Beatty. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press. 1938. Pp. 387.

Quarterly Magazine while he was still an undergraduate: and of course there are his letters in Trevelyan's *Life of Macaulay*. What could be more fascinating reading than to trace the course of Macaulay's main passion for English constitutional history as it serially is disclosed in his successive essays? Those essays of his published before 1838 must now be regarded as his preliminary sketches for the major work, *The History of England*, conceived during his exile in India and written and published in part during the remainder of his life, after his return to England. Nor should it be overlooked that, with the collected edition of his fugitive essays in 1842, he reviewed his progress and thereby arrested his attention, and caused him to consolidate his theory of "noiseless revolutions" in the five-volume *History*.

Macaulay's whole career, then, should be seen from the point of view of his Indian exile. Little did he realize what his removal from England, shortly after the elation of the success of the First Reform Bill (1832), would do to him. From 1834 to 1838, while he resided in Calcutta, member of the Supreme Council of India, he was your true-born Englishman, keenly conscious of the material progress of England, as he circulated in an ancient civilization whose progress had been arrested. What is the psychology of the alien? Macaulay did not adjust himself to the new environment, in spite of or because of his official position as an English reformer in what was to him a backward country. Contrasts between "progressive" England and backward India inevitably more deeply entrenched his mind in those grooves of the secrets of English political ways he had begun to delineate in his occasional essays printed in the *Edinburgh Review* from 1828 to 1834. In India, static and placid, that big idea of his, enunciated in his essay on "History" (May, 1828),—that idea of "noiseless revolutions"—germinated as the organizing and centralizing vortex for his fluent and teeming mind.

Except for the phrase itself, there was nothing particularly original in Macaulay's idea of history as "noiseless revolutions". Historical materials which had been interpreted by Hume, Brodie, and Hallam from contradictory partisan biases were harmonized and transmuted by Macaulay's appropriation of the Burke concept. He was so aware of the approaching changes towards

which England was moving by the prospect of the end of the dissolute reigns of George IV and William IV and the accession of a young girl as Queen that he seized the appropriate moment to consolidate gains in political thinking by interpreting them to a rapidly enlarging reading public and succeeded in infecting his generation with the Burkian principle of continuance and in resuscitating the optimistic, rationalistic, and benevolent *philanthropism* of the eighteenth century.

Mr. Beatty's *Lord Macaulay: Victorian Liberal* is objective: it is Macaulayan in its swift and somewhat cavalier lucidity, in suavity of mood, and in gentlemanly taste. Its biographical method of categorical treatment reminds one of Gamaliel Bradford's while its monosyllabic chapter-titles was the invention of Mr. John Donald Wade in the latter's *John Wesley*. Its failure to discern any motivating and unifying principle to account for Macaulay's achievements in letters is only too obviously like the literary method of biographers who only amuse. Macaulay stands out so boldly as the apologist for industrialist capitalism that Mr. Beatty, were he a Nashville Agrarian of the *I'll Take My Stand* school, might easily have made him a scapegoat: Macaulay, too, would have made a very pleasing object of ridicule, irony, and sarcasm for the Agrarians who find acerbities a convenient mode of criticism and Macaulay's coherences and cogencies an occasion for obscure innuendoes. Mr. Beatty blithely dismissed this temptation, one may say to his credit, though one knows from his incisive and bright *William Byrd of Westover* that he possesses a sapping power of analysis and a charming scepticism which destroys vested insipidities of stylized "tact". With sure hand he communicates Macaulay's personality and leaves no question that he approves of Macaulay's comfortable gospel of progress, success, and usefulness. If he fails in critical detachment, as he most obviously does, the reason may plausibly be found in the fact that it is very difficult to criticize so good-natured a man as Macaulay: a man of domestic felicities, warm-hearted and generous, ebullient in radiant effusiveness. Macaulay is with Goldsmith, Washington Irving, and Thackeray: who can detach himself from so gentle a soul as any of these? Are we not grateful that his productions, defective as they may be, remind us of lost literary innocence: do they not

enable us to do with good humour what we must do, and to endure what depresses and threatens us, without too easy and too impulsive explosions of complaint or bluster?

by T. Walter Herbert

BIRD

Low on the mountain tops
The lazy morning stoops.
An instant's poise—
A headlong rush—
Dawn dives low;
And up to the sky
A splash of blue
Flings the day.

Come, my sleepy song;
Forget your drowsy tune.
A lilting ballad—
A voice to trill it—
We'll leave the hay
And, frolicking now,
Mounting high,
Sing for glee.

by Irene Weir

ESCAPE!

Let me go out
Quickly,
Like candle flame burning
Brightly,
No wavering, no flickering,
A puff, one tiny spark,
Then dark.

Be it a quick escape,
Not lingering
Foolish to longer wait,
No returning.
Out, up, as the lark soaring
On to high heaven's gate,
The small earth spurning.

The stars grow lustrous, bright,
Glittering,
Thin cold rushing wind shrill
Whistling,
This tiny flame so light, myself
I scarce know it,
All that is left now, soul, spirit.

Systems of stars and suns only
Remaining,
Cloud rift and sunset red, void now
Dissolving,
How is this tiny soul worth God's
Reclaiming,
Thru Death to Life itself,
Returning.

Great souls have passed this way;
Passionate, daring;
Enduring with heart aflame
Hell's crucifixion;
Each passing on to win
Thorn crown for laurel,
Fearless in faltering dawn
Shall I not follow?

Christ came once, this same way.
Heaven leaving,
From Life thru Death for our sake,
Triumphant cleaving;
Pioneer, leader, He blazed the stern pathway;
Bright flame of love divine.
Fearless, I follow.

Up through high heaven's gate
The dawn is breaking;
Rose-tinted light evolved,
Dull earth forsaking;
There by the throne of God
Breathless, I falter;
"Father, Thy child is here,
Here at Thy altar."

by Richard D. Altick

HUMOROUS HOGARTH

HIS LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS

THE high position William Hogarth occupies in the history of art has been so heartily affirmed by the most distinguished critics of two centuries that it now seems established beyond question. Not so much attention, however, has been paid to Hogarth's abundant associations with English literature. Although probably every booklover has suspected at one time or another that behind the strikingly frequent references to Hogarth in literature all the way from *Tom Jones* to *The Flowering of New England* there must lie an interesting study, seldom if ever, I believe, has especial note been taken of Hogarth as an integral part of the English literary tradition.

Hogarth is in a very true sense the favorite artist of English literature. In his work the twin streams of literature and art fruitfully joined, for not only did he strive to adapt the principles and methods of the contemporary literature to his own graphic art, but his own thoroughly democratic spirit, expressed in scores of famous prints, had important effects upon the course of literature in the next hundred years. Hogarth was acquainted more or less intimately with most of the great writers of his time, and his work is as full of associations with books and writers as eighteenth-century literature is full of allusions to his fine art. Because of this strong literary element in both his life and his work, and because his prints afford us an incomparably lively and vivid panorama of the scenes and personages in London at the time of Parson Adams and Uncle Toby, Hogarth has always aroused the interest and enthusiasm of men of letters. It is only natural, then, that through the service of such admirers as Lamb and Hazlitt, Hogarth holds the distinction of being a practitioner of one art who occupies a place of honor in two.

Hogarth, in contrast with other painters who figure in literature, was not "literary" in the usual sense. A simple, honest, ruddy bourgeois, he was apprenticed at the age of fifteen to a silversmith in London, and never in his life, so far as the extant evidence suggests, was he a very wide reader. Nevertheless, his expressed purpose "to treat my subjects as a Dramatic Writer" was not an idle wish, for the peculiarly literary quality of his prints and paintings has been remarked upon by many of his best critics. "[Hogarth's] graphic representations," wrote Lamb, "are indeed books; they have the teeming, fruitful, suggestive meaning of *words*. Other pictures we look at,—his prints we read." Hazlitt classed him among the great English comic *writers*, Thackeray included him, one painter among such writers as Swift, Gray, Pope, Steele, and Goldsmith, as one of the great English humorists; Horace Walpole called him "a writer of comedy with a pencil"; and Lord Gardenstone, a Scottish judge, added the indispensable seal of legality to the practice of according Hogarth literary distinction when, in deciding a literary case in July, 1773, he characterized him as "the only true original Author which this age has produced in England."

With his purpose set so clearly before him, Hogarth was remarkably successful in embodying in his work the essential spirit of the literature of the first half of the eighteenth century. His best and most typical productions represent an extension into graphic art, almost unique in British annals, of the principles and methods of contemporary writers. They echo the satirical spirit of both Swift and Addison, and employ in a skillful way the narrative form of Fielding and the realism of Defoe.

II

No one, having looked at (or "read", to adopt Lamb's emendation) Hogarth's portrayal in *Marriage à la Mode* of the manners of high society and the tragic consequences of a marriage of convenience, will refuse to accord him an honored place with the other great satirists of his time, as one whose sharp graving tools were used with deadly effectiveness to deflate the sagging balloon of pretense and to prick the thick skin of the English conscience. A complete list of the objects of Hogarth's satire is, in effect, a

thorough catalog of the evils that beset English society during an age whose callous indifference to suffering and whose pompous vanities combined elements of both tragedy and absurdity. He attacked the coarser vices with which the period abounded, excessive drinking, obscenity, cruelty in all its forms, rampant crime unhindered by any force of law; as well as the trivialities that received so disproportionate an emphasis, affectations of dress and manners, foibles of thought, an abnormal superficiality of outlook and standard. An artist who was as insular as John Bull himself, Hogarth took great delight in lampooning those perennial objects of English mirth, the French. He subjected the high-spirited chicanery of contemporary election practices to hearty laughter in the riotous *Election* series, in one scene of which creditors of present-day political parties may find their image in the figure of the pedlar who, having sold his entire stock to the candidate to distribute as favors at the election-eve banquet, does not relish the idea of holding a fifty-pound I.O.U. due six months after election. In the *Consultations of Physicians* we may identify a number of the leading quacks of the period, deftly caricatured; and *Credulity, Superstition, and Fanaticism* offers us a lively kaleidoscope of several of the most notorious hoaxes perpetrated upon the naïve populace that believed with equal seriousness in Mary Taft's having borne a litter of rabbits and the authenticity of the Cock Lane ghost.

Hogarth's satirical method contains reminiscences of both Swift and Addison. In some prints he is bold and savage, in others tender and compassionate. Two of his most Swiftian works, which for sheer brutality rival anything the misanthropic Dean ever wrote, are *Gin Lane* and *The Four Stages of Cruelty*. *Gin Lane* is a picture inspired by the appalling prevalence of gin-drinking in mid-century London, whose extent is indicated by Henry Fielding's estimate in 1751 that gin formed the chief sustenance of 100,000 inhabitants of the city alone. It shows the countless depravities that accrue to a neighborhood addicted to the use of gin. The other, a diatribe against the century's cold indifference to suffering, is a series of four plates in which Hogarth depicts, with the stark realism of present-day sensational photography, no less than fourteen kinds of cruelty, from the evisceration of a man on

the dissecting-table to the burning out of the eyes of a bird with a red-hot knitting-needle. Yet Hogarth's satire, vivid as it is, possesses a geniality which Swift's never quite achieves. Only in the case of the *Cruelty* series does it so far sacrifice humor to horror as to border on the pathological. In the great majority of instances Hogarth displays a warm and tender heart, to which, in the words of a recent writer, "the sufferings of man or beast were intolerable." Addison would have been proud to acknowledge him as a brother artist. The *Harlot's Progress* series ends with a death-scene which equals in poignancy Fielding's most touching passages. And above all, Hogarth's satire is distinguished by a solid British robustness, which is nowhere better illustrated than in the hearty *Beer Street* plate, the companion piece to *Gin Lane*, in which he shows the substantial happiness of a neighborhood which depends for refreshment upon the national beverage.

The attitude of the age toward Hogarth's satire was well expressed by his friend Henry Fielding, who wrote in the *Champion* for June 10, 1740: "I esteem the ingenious Mr. Hogarth as one of the most useful Satyrists any Age hath produced . . . I almost dare affirm that those two works of his, which he calls the *Rake's* and the *Harlot's Progress*, are calculated more to serve the Cause of Virtue, and for the Preservation of Mankind, than all the *Folio's* of Morality which have ever been written; and a sober Family should no more be without them, than without 'The Whole Duty of Man' in their house." The great majority of people agreed; for sets of Hogarth's prints served the cause of virtue in almost every English home of any consequence, including that of Goldsmith's *Hardcastle*, and as late as the second decade of the next century no wealthy Boston merchant could even pretend to culture without his set of framed Hogarths, prominently displayed.

Lamb remarked that Hogarth's prints were "analogous to the best novels of Smollett and Fielding." Whether motivated by mere opportunism that made him take profitable advantage of the contemporary success of the novel, or by a recognition of the great artistic possibilities inherent in the novel-form translated into pictures, it was Hogarth's genius that revived the artistic form of the connected narrative, and provided eighteenth-century art with its own versions of *Clarissa Harlowe* and *Joseph Andrews*. The fa-

mous Hogarth series are remarkably faithful adaptations of the novel technique. *Marriage à la Mode*, a narrative in six plates, or, as we may properly call them, chapters, "reads", as a late nineteenth-century critic put it, "like *Tom Jones*." As Fielding quaintly described the method, "You see the delusive Scene exposed with all the Force of Humour, and, on casting your Eyes on another Picture, you behold the dreadful and fatal Consequences." A *Harlot's Progress*, suggested, it is thought, by one of Steele's *Spectator* papers, follows the career of an adventuress—*Moll Flanders* in pictures instead of print. *Industry and Idleness* traces, in its twelve scenes, the simultaneous careers of an industrious apprentice, who becomes Lord Mayor, and an idle one, who ends on the gallows at Tyburn—a triumphant demonstration of the fact that ascent to material success through virtue made as popular a story in the eighteenth century as it did in the time of Horatio Alger.

It is literally true, furthermore, that we *read* the pictures, for Hogarth names his characters through devices like that of a letter protruding from a pocket. Thus the candidate from the constituency of Guzzledown, in the *Election* series, is Sir Commodity Taxem, and his minion is Tim Partytool; and the industrious apprentice is named Frank Goodchild. Words are constantly used in the pictures to help bring out the meaning, as in the "Plan for Paying the National Debt" which the debtor is carrying about with him in the famous prison-scene in *A Rake's Progress*, and the "Give Us Our Eleven Days" (an allusion to the alteration of the calendar style in the year 1752, a sore subject with many of the English electorate) in the *Election* series.

Even the picaresque element, so essential a part of the eighteenth-century novel, is found in abundance in these prints. There are rogues in the title rôles and in the supporting casts—rogues everywhere, so many that it will pay someone to make a complete inventory of the felonies and misdemeanors committed in Hogarth's plates, just as an enlightening investigation was once made into the amount of liquor consumed in the *Pickwick Papers*. Pickpockets are operating everywhere, from Bridewell to the cockpit in St. James's Park; dogs are snatching bare bones from the very mouths of their starving masters; nurses are robbing the trunks of their dying patients; and in the *March to Finchley* a pastrycook is

relieved of one of his pies while he is laughing at the sight of a milkmaid who is being robbed of her milk at the same time she is being kissed by a soldier; and behind the pieman as he laughs is a man carrying a barrel of strong-beer which a soldier has slyly drained with the aid of a gimlet. The manner in which Hogarth portrays this constant thievery suggests that he regarded it as an evidence not so much of criminality on the part of his wretched contemporaries as of uncontrollable kleptomania.

But even more striking, perhaps, is Hogarth's adherence to the realistic tradition begun by Defoe, who died in the year 1731, when the engraver was first achieving fame with his book-illustrations and *genre* plates. It is not too much to say that Hogarth was one of the two or three greatest realists of his age. His pictures are filled with tiny details, each of which adds its bit to the cumulative effect. The position of a chair, a piece of rotting wainscoting, a number of bottles on a mantel, the hawking of a certain broadside at a fair, each tells its story. This characteristic of all of Hogarth's work recalls a pleasant incident in the lives of Charles and Mary Lamb. Originally their Hogarth's hung in narrow black frames around the walls of their Inner Temple Lane chambers. On November 21, 1817, however we find Mary writing to Dorothy Wordsworth, "Charles has had all his Hogarth's bound in a book, they were sent home yesterday and now that I have them all together and perceive the advantage of peeping close at them through my spectacles I am reconciled to the loss of them hanging round the room which has been a great mortification to me." One wishes Mary had written an essay "On First Looking at Mr. Hogarth's Prints through my Spectacles." Surely she must have missed by far the greater part of their stories while they hung on the walls; one wonders if she had ever noticed the cobwebs on the church poor-box in one of the plates. To Charles's remark that "other prints we look at,—*his* we read", Austin Dobson has felicitously added, "The type is of the smallest, and the page is packed to the margin." To add the final degree of veraciousness to his prints, Hogarth includes contemporary dates in his designs, such as the entry in the dead miser's journal which comfortably notes, June the 5th 1721. Put off my bad shilling" and when he wishes to depict a robbers' den he conscientiously reproduces the notorious

Blood-Bowl House in Chick Lane, Smithfield. To this outstanding quality of his art, as to that of Defoe's, we owe much priceless information about the life and sights of the eighteenth century.

III

Thus Hogarth adapted in his graphic art some of the chief methods of the literature of his time. In return, English literature received from his honest, earthy temperament an impetus that was not to make itself strongly felt until the day (over a half a century after the publication of *Beer Street* and *Gin Lane*, *Southwark Fair* the *Election* series and the *March to Finchley*) when the poems of Burns and Wordsworth finally proclaimed the artistic worth of the common man. For Hogarth, who was a rising young artist when *The Seasons* appeared, and at the height of his fame at the time of the publication of *The Castle of Indolence*, contributed in no small amount to the development of romanticism, in relation especially to the triumph of democracy in literature. His contribution was not direct, nor was it felt immediately; but it was nevertheless important.

Hogarth's ideas on esthetics, which, as even Edmund Burke admitted, were "extremely just," were contained in the small treatise which was his only literary work, *The Analysis of Beauty*. In it he insisted that true art should avoid slavish regularity, and plead for the study of nature and outdoor life. Professor Phelps, in his study of the beginnings of the romantic movement, credits the volume with having had a definite influence upon the trend that culminated in romanticism. But of far greater importance were Hogarth's artistic works themselves, into which he poured his passionate democracy. Into a world chilled by the formal and aristocratic culture that emanated from Versailles he brought a thorough conviction that his servants, the poor wretches of *Gin Lane*, the well-fed, patriotic Englishmen of *Beer Street*, the roistering bourgeois of *An Election Entertainment*, were as deserving of artistic treatment as the splendid sitters of Gainsborough and Sir Joshua. His pictures embodied a spirit not again to be so fully expressed until the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* appeared in 1798. He scorned shepherdesses and gods, and went for his mater-

ial direct to the life outside his studio window—to the Ruins of St. Giles, and the Rummery Tavern at Charing Cross.

"Hogarth," as Sir Esme Wingfield-Stratford has said, "was at least as complete a democrat as Rousseau, and it was unnecessary for him to preach about it, because his nature was so constituted that he could conceive of nothing else. His spirit is the absolute negation of the eighteenth century exclusiveness which regarded a well-born and educated person as a different order of being from those less fortunate than himself. His innate consciousness of human brotherhood was such that he had no interest in a lord as a lord or a servant as a servant, but only in the man, whom he regarded with a penetrating curiosity that pierced through the rank as easily as an X-ray through the skin."

Gamaliel Bradford's comment on Thackeray, who is possibly Hogarth's closest literary analogue, may be quoted as an accurate statement of the essence of Hogarth's art as well. Thackeray combined, said Bradford, "the simple instinct of observing life as it is" with "the Romantic disposition to moralize upon it . . ." Thus, considering the social purpose underlying Hogarth's eighteenth-century realism, together with his close association with the literature of his time, and the immense popularity of his prints, with the resultant influencing of taste among the public that was to witness the revolution in literature at the turn of the century, we may be justified, I think, in ranking Hogarth among the major precursors of romanticism.

IV

In his life and in his works we find Hogarth at every point coming into contact with his literary contemporaries. Early in his professional career he engraved a set of sixteen small designs for the 1726 edition of *Hudibras* and another series of illustrations for *Don Quixote*. In 1731 he engraved the frontispiece to Fielding's *Tragedy of Tragedies*, a task which probably marked the beginning of the long friendship between the painter and the author of *Tom Jones*. Earlier Hogarth had made the frontispiece for Volumes I and II of *Tristram Shandy*, in which Sterne commended *The Analysis of Beauty* to the attention of his readers.

Though, if tradition is correct, Hogarth had so great admiration

for Pope that one of his earliest creations was an engraving upon a snuff-box lid of a scene from *The Rape of the Lock*, Pope, almost alone among the great writers of the period, failed utterly to notice him. In 1732, however, Hogarth had his revenge when his plate *The Man of Taste* was used as the frontispiece to *A Miscellany on Tastes by Mr. Pope &c.* This was a satire on Pope's attack on the Duke of Chandos in his epistle to Lord Burlington's *On Taste*: its message probably made Pope boil, but wisely, considering the skill of his opponent in his own *forte*, Pope never replied.

Among all his admirers, Hogarth numbered none more enthusiastic than the Dean of St. Patrick's. In a letter dated November 15, 1740, George Faulkner, the Dublin bookseller, told Hogarth that he had often had the pleasure of drinking his health with Dr. Swift, who, he continued, "is a great admirer of yours, and hath made mention of you in his poems with great honor; and desired me to thank you for your kind present, and to accept of his service." The "kind present" may have been some of Hogarth's own works which the artist himself had sent to Swift; at any rate, we have the passage in Swift's *Legion Club* to which Faulkner alluded:

How I want thee, humorous Hogarth!
Thou, I hear, a pleasant rogue art.
Were but you and I acquainted,
Every monster should be painted;
You should try your graving tools
On this odious group of fools;
Draw the beasts as I describe them;
Form the features, while I gibe them;
Draw them like, for I assure you,
You will need no *car'atura*;
Draw them so, that we may trace
All the soul in every face.

Fortunately, however, Hogarth never joined forces with Swift. Each went his separate way, and Hogarth never reached the point of considering mankind merely as "this odious group of fools."

Horace Walpole patronized Hogarth and collected his prints; and, if we may believe George Steevens, he invited him to Strawberry Hill to meet Gray at dinner. The experiment, however, was far from successful, for Gray sat silent, and Hogarth, embarrassed, no doubt, by the splendor of Walpole's estate, was glum and ill at ease.

Hogarth had considerable intercourse in his last years with the Johnsonian circle. Boswell tells the story, on the authority of Sir Joshua Reynolds, of Hogarth's first seeing Johnson at Samuel Richardson's house. Hogarth was commenting on George III's probable reasons for ordering the execution of the rebel Dr. Cameron so long after the commission of his crime. "While he was talking, he perceived a person standing at a window in the room, shaking his head, and rolling himself about in a strange ridiculous manner. He concluded that he was an ideot, whom his relations had put under the care of Mr. Richardson, as a very good man. To his great surprise, however, this figure stalked forwards to where he and Mr. Richardson were sitting, and all at once took up the argument, and burst out into an invective against George Second . . . He displayed such a power of eloquence, that Hogarth looked at him with astonishment, and actually imagined that this ideot had been at the moment inspired. Neither Hogarth nor Johnson were made known to each other at this interview." Later, however, Hogarth had many pleasant meetings with Dr. Johnson.

He knew Mrs. Thrale, and it may be her portrait we see in his painting *The Lady's Last Stake*. "Dear Mr. Hogarth," she recalled, was accustomed to give her as a girl "odd particular directions about dress, dancing, and many other matters." He often talked to her about Johnson, and urged her to obtain his friendship, though Hogarth did not live to see the famous friendship begun. He was a friend of John Gay, and did several versions of a scene in *The Beggar's Opera*. He enjoyed a long friendship with Garrick, whom he painted several times and was rewarded by having the actor's *Farmer's Return to London*, an interlude popular in 1762, dedicated to him. *Marriage à la Mode* suggested Garrick's and Colman's play *The Clandestine Marriage*, in which mention was made of Hogarth. And in his last three years he had some intercourse with Goldsmith, of whom he made a half-length sketch.

Garrick and Johnson both interested themselves in preparing epitaphs for their friend. Johnson's quatrain,

The Hand of Art here torpid lies,
That traced the essential form of Grace;
"Here Death has closed the curious eyes"
That saw the manners in the face,

is apparently a suggested emendation of the first form of Garrick's epitaph, which reads in its finished form as follows:

Farewell, great painter of Mankind!
Who reach'd the noblest point of Art,
Whose *pictur'd Morals* charm the Mind,
And through the Eye correct the Heart.

If *Genius* fire thee, Reader, stay;
If *Nature* touch thee, drop a tear;
If neither move thee, turn away,
For HOGARTH's honour'd dust lies here.

Hogarth's claim to remembrance in the literary history of his day is made complete by his having participated in several of the controversies with which the century was dotted. He dared to assail Wilkes with caricatures at a time when the demagogue was at the height of his popularity, and received in return a hot blast from the *North Briton*. And he fought at Swift's side in the battle between the ancients and the moderns, following *The Battle of the Books*, some years after its appearance, with a lively drawing called *The Battle of the Pictures*, a keen shaft at the art dealers' practice of selling facsimiles of famous pictures as originals, while contemporary painters went begging. In the battle a picture of St. Francis drives itself through Hogarth's *Morning*, and a weeping Magdalene inflicts similar punishment upon the third plate of *A Harlot's Progress*; but the moderns are finally victorious, for the riotous scene from *A Rake's Progress* badly damages Titian's *Feast of Olympus*, while a Rubens Bacchanalian suffers a like fate from Hogarth's *Modern Midnight Conversation*.

V

It is unnecessary to speak at length of the later echoes of Hogarth in English literature, for they are perhaps better known to the average reader than his contemporary associations with it. Readers who first became acquainted with *A Harlot's Progress* because Fielding referred them there for portraits of Thwackum and Partridge's wife, were succeeded by a generation which knew Hogarth's prints through the brilliant critical essays of Coleridge, Lamb, and Hazlitt—the three main sources of the modern reader's knowledge of Hogarth. Later Dickens, who, as his biographer

Forster well says, "closely resembled him in genius", added to the literature on Hogarth a short but masterly criticism of *Gin Lane*. Then came Thackeray, who wrote of "honest Hogarth" in *English Humorists* and *The Four Georges* with the gusto so typical of the author of some of the most colorful essays on the Hogarthian age. In the nineties Austin Dobson, the heir of Lamb's love for the eighteenth century, wrote the definitive memoir of the artist, which has been called by Thomas Craven, himself the author of an excellent study of Hogarth in *Men of Art*, "a perfect biography."

A brief tracing of the literary references to his figure of the prude, in the plate *Morning*, will serve to suggest the extent to which literature is indebted to Hogarth's inventiveness. Fielding, in the first place, borrowed her "starched lineaments" for the portrait of Miss Bridget Allworthy in *Tom Jones*. "I would attempt to draw her picture," he says, "but that is done already by a more able master, Mr. Hogarth himself, to whom she sat many years ago, and hath been lately exhibited by that gentleman in his print of a winter's morning, of which she was no improper emblem, and may be seen walking (for walk she doth in the print) to Covent Garden Church, with a starved foot-boy behind carrying her prayer-book." Hazlitt said of this lady, "who, having seen, can easily forget that exquisite frost-piece of religion and morality, the antiquated Prude in the Morning Scene, or that striking commentary on the good old times, the little wretched appendage of a Footboy, who crawls, half famished and half frozen, behind her?" But perhaps the best tribute paid to the prude is the lines Cowper devoted to her in his poem *Truth*. All of Cowper's early satires, like the poems of Crabbe, everywhere bear unmistakable traces of close familiarity with Hogarth. Listen to him, in *Truth*:

Yon ancient prude, whose wither'd features show
She might be young some forty years ago,
Her elbows pinioned close upon her hips,
Her head erect, her fan upon her lips,
Her eyebrows arched, her eyes both gone astray,
To watch yon amorous couple in their play,
With bony and unkerchief'd neck defies
The rude inclemency of wintry skies,
And sails with lappet head and mincing airs
Duly at clink of bell to morning prayers.
To thrift and parsimony much inclined,

She yet allows herself that boy behind;
The shivering urchin, bending as he goes,
With slipshod heels and dewdrop at his nose,
His predecessor's coat advanced to wear,
Which future pages yet are doom'd to share,
Carries her Bible tuck'd beneath his arm,
And hides his hands to keep his fingers warm.

Thackeray, finally, copied the prude for one of the initials to the *Roundabout Papers*. It is amusing to note in passing that legend says the model for this famous portrait was Hogarth's own aunt, from whom he expected a sizable legacy. Her will had, in fact, already been made in his favor, but upon seeing herself in the plate *Morning* she immediately struck out the generous provision she had made for her irreverent nephew.

This, then, is the William Hogarth who figures in English literature: Hogarth, the satirist who ranks (on the authority of Lamb) with Juvenal, and whose prints were worthy companions to the *Dunciad* and *The Beggar's Opera*; Hogarth, the peerless portrayer of the London of Pope and Garrick, whose "admirable works," in Thackeray's words, "give us the most complete and truthful picture of the manners, and even the thoughts, of the past century." It is pleasant to reflect that the aspirations a straightforward English artist had to paint as a "dramatic writer" have resulted in the end in his being immortalized by the praise of Lamb and Thackeray, who found in him a kindred spirit.

by Dudley Fitts

THE SONNETS OF MERRILL MOORE

'The Sonnet is the corner-stone of English poetry.'

T. W. H. Crosland

'The history of the sonnet as a poetic form. . . also confirms the theory that the sonnet has been the means of sublimating unconscious incest-wishes.'

Clarissa Rinaker

I UNDERTAKE this task with considerable diffidence. In the first place, I have been associated with Merrill Moore's literary activity for ten years—ever since the publication of *The Noise That Time Makes*, which I reviewed for *Hound & Horn*. In the second place, I was personally involved in the preparation of the book I propose to discuss in this essay: the thousand sonnets that make up *M* were chosen from God knows how many thousands read and, as it were, graded by a kind of Jury composed of John Crowe Ransom, Donald Davidson, Alfred Starr, Louis Untermeyer, and myself. This jury never sat as a body, and, so far as I know, its members never communicated their findings to each other; but the consensus of its judgment was of prime importance in guiding the author's final choice for his book. For these reasons I am in a sense disqualified as a critic: I can not speak with complete objectivity of the poetry of Merrill Moore because I have been too close to it in the making. But no one, so far, has shown any disposition to treat the subject with the seriousness I think it deserves. The almost universal reaction to *M*—as to *Six Sides to a Man* and (to a smaller extent, since the author was then unknown) *The Noise That Time Makes*—has been that of amused tolerance, of irrelevant, half-ironic applause. For there is a Merrill-Moore legend,—the ten sonnets daily, the fifty thousand yet unpublished sonnets in the bound files, the prescription blank, the laundry-check, telephone-pad jottings for poems, the sonnets scribbled at

crossings between the changes of the traffic lights,—and while, like most literary legends, this is amusing, it is also unfortunate. Mr. Untermeyer performed no service to Dr. Moore in insisting upon it in his epilogue to *Six Sides*. The news-releases that attended the publication of *M* were a bad blunder. *The New Yorker's* frothy paragraph was good publicity, but dangerous in its implications; and the approach it suggested was made fully and with characteristic cheapness by the reviewer for *Time*.

If Merrill Moore were only the literary side-show exhibit that people who write about him apparently believe him to be, no one could object to the ballyhoo. It seems to me, however, that the legend and the ballyhoo are impertinent; that these people have been perfectly willing to gape at the poet and marvel in hyperbole at his undeniable eccentricities, but that very few of them have taken the pains to read his poems and consider them, as they would consider the poems of anyone else, soberly. Consequently I was not sorry when the editor of *The Sewanee Review* invited me to write an article on *M*. What I have to say will be as rambling in form as the book itself; but it is my hope that these tentative notes, feeble though they may be, may serve the purpose of recalling serious attention to a body of work that deserves no less.

II

*M: One Thousand Autobiographical Sonnets** is divided into ten sections. The classification is rough: categories tend to overlap, and in many cases it is obvious that the allocation of a given sonnet to this or that section was arbitrary. In general, the categories are an extension of the formal device that governed *Six Sides to a Man*: the five senses and one 'superior' sense of the earlier book have become here ten departments of experience.

The first section (which, except for the third, seems to me the least valuable) is headed 'Contemplative: Philosophica, Religiosa'. These poems are chiefly Correct Attitudes—musings upon life, reworkings of commonplace, aphorisms. They are most successful when they are most dramatic and least 'contemplative'. When the idea or the speculation is clothed in action—when the poet

*Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York City, 1939.

presents the situation in terms of himself, speaking, acting,—it is much more likely to come through than it is when he merely states. Statement alone is apt to end in mental and verbal woolliness: see, for instance, 'Orestes to Kalydon' [19], or the falsely simple opening of 'Assorted Aphorisms' [67]:

*The anatomy of behavior is more
Unaccounted than accounted for.*

Dr. Moore is not happy in his management of abstractions. It is when he gets himself into the poem, as reporter or as agonist, that the lines come to life. The last sonnet in the section is an illustration of this:

*The curtain fell, and then the light, a flood
Of brilliance, burned my eyes until the tears
That stood in them turned to drops of blood,
And then I saw and wished I had not seen.*

*Here was all divulged, the dissonance
And harmony of heaven and of hell,
The ways and means of sorrows and of tears,
And all the human joys that ever fell*

*From nature's lap into the hands of men;
And I stood there filled with regret that chance
Had ever let it be that I was given
So much to see and know, so little to tell
Because so much was indescribable:*

So I stood there silent, long after it had fallen.

This is a run-of-the-mill piece, neither particularly good nor particularly bad; it is useful in that it displays Dr. Moore's virtues and weaknesses side by side. The first four lines, which are dramatic, have an authority which the second four, for all their pretentiousness of language, lack. The opening is concrete, hard, almost tactile. The fusion of fire and water ('flood of brilliance',

'burned. . . tears'), the changing of tears into blood-drops (observation in hyperbole, the reference apparently being to the inflammation caused by eye-strain: 'so much to see and know')—these things have a definite tension. But with the fifth line the generalities begin: 'dissonance' is divulged, and 'harmony of heaven and of hell' (I suspect that the letter H is to blame for the speciousness of that line, just as the old trope Respective Construction accounts for the imprecision of the next); and finally there is a definite image, but an unworkable one—'joys' falling from nature's lap (where, then, is nature?) into men's hands. This section is vague enough in itself; and the theatre-connotations of the title and concreteness of the first quatrain further confuse it. Then, in the tenth line, the 'I' reappears, and the rhetoric vanishes; the sonnet closes with the force with which it began: 'So I stood there silent, long after it had fallen.' The verse is dissociated from the rest of the poem by the typographical spacing and by the dissonance of not riming; but its power lies not so much in this dissociation as in its conveying the dominant idea of the poem in terms of an action ('I stood there'). Compare two epigrams from 'Assorted Aphorisms':

I

*And that noise, that sound, that ages make:
It is slighter than the hissing snake—*

The image—snake hissing—is realized; the clash (small snake against vast ages), not the true (but suppressed) observation that snakes make noises and ages can't, dramatizes the image and makes poetry. The other epigram:

2

*How deep is Oceanus? Ocean is
Not so deep as some emergencies.*

Name? Age? Date? 'Phone-number? 'Oceanus' (is one to say 'Océanus' or 'Océanus?') is ascertainably deep; the hiss of a snake can be measured in decibels, if anyone cares to do it; Chaucer has some very lovely lines about the music of the spheres,

*That welle is of musyke and melodye
In this world heer, and cause of armonye,*

and that will do for the noise that ages make; but how deep is an emergency? The collapse of this couplet is due to the same looseness that weakens the middle portion of 'The Curtain Falls'.

The second section of *M*, which is also the longest, is called 'Biographica'. These three hundred sonnets deal with all kinds of subjects, but most of them have one thing in common: they are generally attempts to recreate a dramatic moment, or a complete episode, or to present in their small compass the essential quality of a man or woman.

Any poet is an exhibitionist. He exhibits his own emotions, obsessions; and when he is not doing this directly (as Dr. Moore does, for instance, in most of the sonnets of the previous section), he is creating characters and situations, and his preoccupation with these is a projection of his own conscious and unconscious emotions and impulses. It is this kind of projection that characterizes the greater part of *M*, and it is what makes even the most objective sonnets something more than mere reporting. The psychiatrists have a characteristically unlovely word for the impulse: the poet is said to 'identify' with his characters. A dramatist must be able to 'identify' with his personages if his words are to come to life upon the stage; and success in this kind of poetry is success in the field of dramatic composition. The range of Dr. Moore's verse is the result of his unusually great capacity to 'identify' with all sorts of men and women; and its depth comes from the thoroughness with which he is able to make these identifications.

But there are levels of identification, with corresponding levels of meaning and qualifications of impact. Such obvious poems as the very beautiful 'Pasce Oves Meos' [235] owe their effect to an identification that use has made traditional: here, for instance, the poet equals an old man sitting in the sun. Identification with recognizably significant persons, too, offers no difficulties: of this type is 'Sculptor's Studio' [306] or 'Leander. . .' [374]. But as the level of identification drops farther and farther below the threshold of consciousness, the sonnets, though they retain the urgent manner of the traditional ones, become queer. They seem

to be moving in the direction of irresponsibility. In some cases (especially in the Seventh Section) they achieve pure *surréalisme*: so we have one sonnet composed of nothing but periods, another of Pullman car names, and so forth. But in many cases the queer-ness arises from a more subtle but not necessarily slighter or any less significant identification of the observer with his subject. An example of this is the two-hundred and fifty-eighth sonnet, with its symptomatically unusual title:

*AND HE HAD LEFT HIS ROOM UNLOCKED, TOO,
WHICH WAS UNUSUAL FOR HIM. HE MUST HAVE
MEANT TO COME BACK THERE WHEN SOMETHING
HAPPENED AND PREVENTED HIM*

*I entered the room at morning, in full day,
It had been closed, was silent, and it had
The atmosphere of having been sealed like a tomb,
As if no one had entered it or had come
Away in many hours. The light burned
As if whoever left it had forgot
To turn it out in leaving, probably planning
To come back soon that night. Now it was morning
And the light still burned. Obviously, what had occurred*

*Was that his plans, subject to interruption,
Had been interrupted; he had not returned,
As he had planned, to the room, so he had left
The room with the light burning. So I had found
The entire situation when I entered in the morning.*

Superficially, it is as objective a statement as anyone could wish about a thing that happened. No one could possibly doubt that it did happen, and exactly as Dr. Moore says it happened. It is unnecessary to point out the feeling of something ominous in the verses; but it is interesting to observe that the effect is achieved not only by the careful insistence upon detail (one would neither remember nor wish to record such detail unless it were associated with something of importance) in the body of the poem and in the after-thought, as it were, of the title: it is the manner, the 'way of

saying the words', that makes the episode, that brings it ominously to life. The stanza form has a great deal to do with this, and the careful weighing of dissonant rhythms in the lines. The immediate response is, 'There's a story here!'; more subtly, the reader perceives and responds to the strangeness of an emotional tone which is suggested, though never clearly defined.

The two-hundred and first sonnet makes its point differently and on a deeper level than 'And he had left his room':

*THE GUN BARREL LOOKED AT HIM
WITH LOVE IN ITS SINGLE EYEHOLE*

*No, it's not so nice, not quite so nice,
This looking down the barrel of a gun,
As in the face of a girl who says, "You're the one
And the only one I've ever loved—that's twice
In the last two minutes I've told you that, my dear."
In either instance you have the same to fear:
The harm that love can do just as good men
Do harm—and that is even more true of women.*

*The girl looks at you with her burning eyes,
And you are burning, all the world is fire;
And that is nicer than looking down a gun.
In the latter case, your life hangs on a wire
That is nearly rusted in two and ready to break
At the tiny noise the trigger snapping will make.*

The datum here seems more clearly dramatic than that of the sonnet about the empty room, but it is actually more ambiguous. A love-scene, isn't it? Apparently you are looking into the face of your girl, who has told you, twice within two minutes, that you are the only man she has ever loved. Her eyes are burning, and you are burning, and, as Dr. Moore says, that is nice—nicer, anyhow, than looking down the barrel of a gun. At this point the strangeness begins. Gun? What gun? In a desperate effort to preserve the affecting little story, the reader tries to account for that gun. Perhaps the girl was playing with the family Mauser,

carelessly left on the divan by Uncle Fred, who belongs to the National Guard; in this case one might excusably plead 'It's much nicer to look at you than at the gun: *please* put it away'. Or perhaps the lover had been about to kill himself with his own pistol, under the impression that the girl didn't love him at all, when suddenly she relented and he realized that it was nicer, &c &c. But the curious thing about the poem is that the gun seems to be identified with the girl's face; its 'eyehole'—the sexual connotations are almost blatant—looks at the lover 'with love'. The imagery is inescapably phallic—gun : penis : eyes. The loving eye of the gun can bring death (cf. the classic ambiguity inherent in the verb 'to die' in its erotic connotations¹); coitus itself is a taste of death, and its prime instrument is a suicidal weapon. This, at any rate, seems to be the point of the poem. How much of it was composed at the level of consciousness, one can not say. The symbolism is fairly crude, and it may be that the whole poem is a conscious trick—an allegory, that is to say. At any event, it is a typical example of indirection disguised as objective statement.

The third section of *M*, entitled 'The Anxiety of Love', is composed of some forty love poems, explicit or disguised. Like the contemplative poems of the first section, these are mostly conventional attitudes:

*And, lovely girl, you who are lovelier
Than silver poplar trees or blue lagoons,**

for instance, or, more faded yet:

*You are the flower that spring has never brought
There, and the gold branch hidden behind the screen
Of leaves that no king's treasury has bought
Or ever could buy, O love unpriced, unsought.**

¹A single instance will suffice. Cf. Crashaw, 'A Hymn to the Name and Honour of the Admirable Sainte Teresa': line 19 sqq: *She neuer undertook to know / What death with loue should haue to doe; / Nor has she e're yet understood / Why to show loue, she should shed blood; / Yet though she cannot tell you why, / She can LOFE, & she can DY.* Cf. also Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, 276-8.

*Lalage' [381]

*The Only Stars' [388]

There is a curious constraint in these poems, a forcing of the tone: it is almost as though the poet's determination to wreck the traditional sonnet were so strong that he cultivated failure in the field where traditionally the sonnet is most at home—the celebration of love. There are good things, but they are never quite unmixed with the bad. The first five lines of the following sonnet, for instance, are excellent; but thereafter there is only perfunctory verbiage, some of it (e.g., the third quatrain) not even coherent; and the poem does not pull itself together again before the last two lines, which owe a limited effectiveness to an echo, in the first, of Yeats, and, in the second, of Cummings:

TAKE THIS

*I have no measure of my loving you,
But when you enter the room my speech is quickened
And when you leave a broad futility
Is draped upon the tables and the chairs.*

*With you to be near, to touch me, I am happy.
Absent—without you, a nameless void is made,
More real than the nescient oblivion
Where you are present, fatefully secure.*

*When you are gone the west is only the place
Where the sun goes down, the east is only
The region where it rises; but when you
Are here both are continually more and different.*

*Take and hold this dark heart, I beg you,
Always in your fast and certain fingers.*

'A broad futility / Is draped upon the tables and the chairs';
'But when you / Are here both are continually more and different':
Dr. Moore at his best and worst.

The fourth section, 'Personae', is made up of more than a

hundred snapshots of all kinds of people and scenes. There is really no reason why they, and the 'Tourist' sonnets of the sixth section, should not have been printed along with the 'Biographica' of the second. Their quality is the same: vivid perception, dramatic reporting. Some of the portraits are especially good:

**BECAUSE SHE WAS YOUNG AND PRETTY THE
STUDENTS KIDDED THE NEW SWISS WAITRESS
AT THEIR EATING HOUSE BUT SHE TOOK IT
WITH GRACE AND GOOD HUMOR**

*It was the first time so much impudence
Had been unchallenged. It was the first time
So much impertinence had dared to climb
The trellis of her affections. She was awed,
Not because she felt that she was outlawed
But by the virtue of a vague dignity
Generations of mountain climbers had acquired
In a climate much to be desired.*

*In Greece, in the vale of Tempe, she might have been
A flower named in memory of a queen,
Or in India she might have been a silver bell*

*Out of which a sound of worship fell,
But here, in reality, she served students buns,
Pointing her finger-nail at the hot buttered ones.*

The super-Wordsworthian title is an amiable gibe, carried on by the tired rhyming (especially the awkward 'much to be desired') and the pseudo-romantic building up through Tempe and India to the hot buttered buns. It is the improvisatory manner that gives such poems as this their charm—the drab analysis of 'Elizabeth Fox, Single, Age 54' [492]; the history of 'Joe Greene' [497], where verbal awkwardness intensifies a particularly poisonous mockery:

*'At Harvard also Joe proceeded to lack
What some call taste and others savoir faire';*

the case-book objectivity of 'Love Without Love, Unmorally Described' [479]. For these poems are actually improvisations, sketches made at the scene of the accident, as it were, and printed without revision. This accounts for the flatness of many lines; and when the substance of the *donnée* is insufficient, the poem collapses. Often, however, this very flatness is a heightening device, an affective underscoring, as in the case of 'much to be desired' in the sketch of the Swiss waitress. I should like to quote one more sonnet from this section to illustrate this point:

GRANNY WEEKS

*When her name was on the tip of the public tongue
Margaret Weeks was fêted and gay and young,*

*She danced divinely (Thomas Hardy has said),
And oh, the lovers, the lovers that shared her bed!*

*She was a rose, a poet declared who died
Holding her autographed picture to his side
A bullet had shattered, a self-inflicted wound,
And all of the press reëchoed to her sound.*

*Today she is old; a granny, a hag, a crone,
Fat and forgotten; like an enormous potato
She lies rheumatic and wrapped deep in her bed,*

*And never the verses of Virgil, the verbiage of Plato,
Could make her magnanimous, glory-ful, charming to see,
Since so like a vegetable she has developed to be.*

The poem is in the great tradition of La Belle Heaulmière:

C'est d'umaine beaulté l'issues!

the merciless disgust arising from the contemplation of an old woman who was once beautiful. John Ransom, in his beautiful 'Blue Girls',—

*For I could tell you a story which is true;
I know a lady with a terrible tongue,
Blear eyes fallen from blue,
All her perfections tarnished—and yet it is not long
Since she was lovelier than any of you—*

writes mutedly, gravely, in this tradition; the Wife of Bath, for all her bravura, belongs to it, as do Pope's terrible old ladies

*Alive, ridiculous; and dead, forgot.**

The mood of 'Granny Weeks' is one of revulsion, of disgust. The theme is love grown old, the turning away from love. The first eight lines in newspaper jargon only slightly heightened describe Granny as she was when Margaret Weeks was a fêted belle, complimented by Thomas Hardy, and the cause of at least one lover's suicide. But now she is a rheumatic old woman, deep in the bed that so many lovers had once shared with her. The poem's diction becomes more harsh as the rhythm becomes more sing-song. The names of Virgil and Plato (deliberately chosen for their hyperbolic inappropriateness to Granny) are brought down to the level of 'enormous potato', 'vegetable'; a coined word, excruciatingly inept—'glory-ful'—contributes its special ugliness to the occasion; and the poem ends with a dissonance that is at once tautology and solecism and frantic clutching at rhyme: 'she has developed to be'. Here, all the devices of verbal clumsiness are employed to express, almost by a kind of onomatopoeia, the violence of the poet's revulsion. It is a dangerous way to achieve an effect, but a legitimate one.

But it must be confessed that this flatness is not always a conscious device. In many instances—perhaps in a majority of instances—the bathos-line is simply the result of careless composition; it is as though the author had tired of the poem before he had finished it, and had had recourse to any lame device to pad his stanza, achieve his rhyme. It is difficult to account for the ending of 'While Atrafis was Walking' [524]:

*Moral Essays: epistle II, 'Of the Characters of Women'. See lines 239-249.

*I must meet all of them tonight, remember
All I know—think nothing of it, chat
Of nothing, this and here and there and that.*

This is sheer let-down, the for-God's-sake-let's-get-it-finished feeling that is all too likely to intrude when Dr. Moore has made his point and found himself a line or two short. But the flat lines and phrases, when they work, are often more moving than many a showier poet's brilliancies.

Section V, a century of poems called 'Pastoral', does with scenes and places what 'Personae' does with persons and episodes: there is the same keen observation, the same felicity of phrase, the same improvisatory declamation. The diction in these poems is generally less nervous than that of the dramatic pieces, and there is a corresponding lack of flat lines and padding. But in the sixth section, headed 'Americana: "Tourist"', the staccato colloquial manner returns. The term 'Tourist' is itself precise: these sonnets are jottings made in overnight camps, in cheap hotels, crowded streets,—the poetic rubberneck-wagon, highlighting America in a disjointed running commentary. The titles themselves set the tone: RINGSIDE, GENTS!—MR. J. W. DODIE; AT THE END—FOR MARY, WHO DID NOT MARRY JOHN, FROM JOHN—SONNET RESULTANT OF TWO FACTORS, FOREMAN OF A MANUFACTURING CONCERN AND HIS CEREBRAL HEMORRHAGE—CRIPES!—CUTIE—YOU DON'T SAY! SURE ENOUGH! REALLY! DO TELL! YOU DON'T MEAN IT! AW GWAN!—MORONS WALKING DOWN THE STREET—A PHOTOGRAM FOR YOU FROM A CHOP-HOUSE IN CITY SLUMS, JANUARY, 1939—"TOO LATE FOR HERPICIDE"—SHUT UP AND LISTEN. There is even a title to end all titles: ABOUT A GIANT BURIED IN A MODERN METROPOLIS WHOSE INHABITANTS MEMORIALIZE HIS NAME BY CALLING THE MAIN STREET AND ONE OF THE TELEPHONE EXCHANGES AFTER HIM BOTH OF WHICH ARE PRESENTLY TO BE REPLACED BY NUMERALS. Nothing could fulfill the promise of that! This, however, is an amusing exception: the 'Tour-

ist' sonnets, with their exuberant variety, are Dr. Moore at his best.

The 'Dreams and Symbols' of the seventh section are the 'queer' sonnets, the perversities: playthings like 'Sonnet in Code' [710],

*Mok-ku ma-la-ku mok-ku ish-mar:
As-ta ve-nu ad-ra-mat u-san-ni,*

and so forth; a 'Sonnet of Pullman Names and Other Words' [711], which has at least one memorable passage:

*Turpitude, Boëtes, Tauris, Latin
Ad astra per aspera, summer is
Icumen in—hey nonny—no birds sing,*

the notorious sonnet composed of periods arranged in careful stanza form, broken lines and all [781]. This is the nightmare section, and the nightmare is schizophrenia. It would be wrong to discount it as simple fooling: even 'Mok-ku ma-la-ku mok-ku ish-mar' has a certain clinical value, and some of these split-personality poems are profoundly interesting from any point of view:

*MY EYES, DAEMON BROTHER,
LISTEN TO MY EYES!*

*My eyes, why do I tantalize them with
Your face, why do I torture with your breath
My ears, why have I never found the sheath
To close your sword in that upon my wall
Has hung long ready and waiting, ready to fall?*

*Damocles, I declare your wit is small
To live so with the sword about to fall;
Find a new house, or build you a new wall
Where you can feel at ease and stand up tall*

*As you have been, as you can be another
Time, if you will take advice to mother
Your weary thoughts that, harried and fatigued,
Survey the sword there twirling on a thread
That may break any minute, daemon brother.*

Here the sword-symbolism, like that of the guns in the poem about impotence ('Too Late for Herpicide' [684]), is crude in its immediacy; but the sonnet has the elusive gnomic quality of a dream remembered in psychoanalysis—the crudeness is deceptive.

The last three sections of *M*,—'Of Prophecy', 'Preoccupations on the Theme of Death', and 'Time the Obsession'—really form one section of some two hundred sonnets. The recurring motive is 'Time the Obsession': Time as drifting pollen, Time as the rising and setting of the stars, Time as stairways that 'Learn a different way to turn', Time as changing gears, arteries hardening, Cheyne-Stokes breathing, the roar of a distant train, haematuria, an old man coughing at night, Time as Death. These symbols of change, these faces and episodes so urgently described, are

The noise that Time makes,

the endless variations upon the theme of Dr. Moore's first published book. The urgency is the urgency of a man compelled to record transience and decay in an attempt as it were to arrest transiency, to block decay. No subject is too slight: the Time-disease rages in the tiniest gesture, the most fugitive event. The very form of the sonnet—mutilated, disorganized, haphazard—is a symbol of change. The fourteen lines, infinitely varied, are a kind of obsessional pattern.

III

Time as obsession; the sonnet form as obsession. The key is to be found in the repetition of form, of idea. I have no skill in psychoanalysis, and am not able to answer such interesting questions as to what extent Dr. Moore's preoccupation with the sonnet is a neurotic compulsion, and therefore with how much justice it may be said that *M* is a psychiatric clinic performed in public. If it is so, Dr. Moore is the physician as well as the patient, and sonnet-writing is a kind of occupational therapy.

Compulsive symbols in poetry are easy enough to recognize: Eliot's hyacinth-girl, blue flowers, blown hair; Shakspeare's recurring sea-imagery in *Othello*; the symbols of erection—towers, cliffs, sheer altitude—throughout Yeats' work. Not all symbols

are compulsive; they become so when, instead of serving merely as instruments of expression, they acquire a recurrent controlling force, determining the expression. Legouis² discusses Marvell's preoccupation, already noted by Grosart and Margoliouth, with the colour green. 'Green' is simply expressive in this couplet from *Thoughts in a Garden*:

*No white nor red was ever seen
So am'rous as this lovely green,*

but there is something obsessional about it as it is used three stanzas later:

*Annihilating all that's made
To a green Thought in a green Shade.*

Mr. Empson helps us here³; I suspect that the psychoanalyst could help us more. Certainly he would claim that he could. He is expert beyond experience of recurring patterns, of mannerisms and symbols that distinguish the work of any artist who has achieved his own style. Perhaps he can tell us why Marvell was in love with green, and why Dr. Moore always writes in sonnets. Let us give him a moment of our patience.

It will not be a long moment. The only extensive psychoanalytic treatment of the sonnet that I have been able to find is the dissertation from which I took the second epigraph for this essay.⁴ Like so many contributions to the psychoanalytical interpretation of literature, this discussion is notable for the curious jargon in which it is composed and the literary insensibility implicit in its judgments. Nevertheless the author does get several interesting things said. The very structure of the sonnet is, for her, full of sexual meaning.

²Pierre Legouis: *André Marvell, Poète, Puritain, Patriote*. [London, 1928] pp.122-3.

³William Empson: *Some Versions of Pastoral*, p. 119 sqq.

⁴Clarissa Rinaker: 'Some Unconscious Factors in the Sonnet as a Poetic Form.' In *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*: Vol. xii, Part II [April 1931].

'The repeated advance and retreat suggested by the rhymes of the octave [Miss Rinaker is discussing the *rima chiusa*, abba-abba form] is commonly followed and stressed by a pause which marks the turning point and shift of thought or mood and makes the sonnet a "double thing". The progress to a further stage (not a mere suspension) in the sestet is marked by the fresh rhymes and different movement not so delicately balanced as the first, which gives its variety in unity.'

This form is held to 'carry a double meaning': the reference is of course to coitus, and Miss Rinaker has been at great pains to collect from critics of the sonnet phrases that will corroborate this double meaning: 'wedge-shaped craft', 'grooved and narrow bows', 'hollowed tree-trunk', 'fulfilled bud', 'mature Petrarchan flower', 'The emphasis is nearly, but not quite, equally distributed, there being a slight swell, or rise, about the middle', 'distilling strong emotion into drops', and so forth. The most charming suggestion of all is relegated to a footnote: Miss Rinaker comments on the satisfaction to the ear that is produced by fourteen rhythmic lines, and refers to an essay entitled 'The Madonna's Conception through the Ear', by Ernest Jones.* Certainly there is a delightful mediaeval hymn (although we never used to sing it much at Compline) that begins

*Ave sancta mater Christi
Quae per aurem concepisti!*

but I never thought, when in my undergraduate days I happened upon it with ribald cries of joy, that I should meet it again in such solemn circumstances! At any rate, here it is; and so far as I am concerned it clinches—perhaps I had better change the word—it confirms the sexual nature of the sonnet-form.

But Miss Rinaker has still more valuable things to give us. The sexual nature of the sonnet is indicated not only by its structure and by the language that critics have employed in describing it; even the motives of their criticism suggest it. The priests and poets who disparage the so-called Shakspearean form suggest,

*In *Essays in Applied Psycho-Analysis*, 1923, pp. 261 sqq.

in their attitude, 'envious rebellious sons murdering with neglect or contempt their envied powerful parent'. But this 'murder' is the impulse to castrate the father, and a form of the Oedipus Complex (for Italian Sonnet equals mother-image). And

'psycho-analytical study has shown that the Oedipus Complex is capable under favourable circumstances of demanding and attaining sublimation of the most valuable sort in every kind of intellectual and artistic activity. But the more completely the complex is transformed by renunciation of the first love-object and by a masculine identification, the more readily it is absorbed in normal sexual life, and the less need there is likely to be for additional aesthetic sublimation. Such happy people seldom write sonnets.'

I think this is true. Even the silly last sentence is symbolically true if one accepts—as I think one must accept—the neurotic nature of the artistic impulse. It is even possible that in the castration-impulse mentioned by Miss Rinaker is to be found the reason for Merrill Moore's incessant and destructive perversions of the prescribed sonnet form. I do not know enough about this subject to be able to judge. And I can not follow blindly a critic who can find sexual significance in the very word 'sonnet': it may be derived, Miss Rinaker says, from the diminutive of *suono*, which would mean 'little sound'; *sonnette*, in French, can mean 'tinkling sheepbells of Provence'. Very well: 'As psychoanalysts know, . . . even a "little sound" that is not specifically produced by the *vibration of a rod-like (or other object) in a concavity* frequently has quite definite unconscious associations with sexual experience.' The italics, as the saying goes, are mine; the thought belongs to the ages.

It may be amusing to indulge in a little psychoanalytical speculation of our own for a moment, taking a hint from Miss Rinaker in reference to the Oedipus Complex. The facts are that Dr. Moore has chosen always to write in the most settled literary form; and that he incessantly attacks that form, breaking all rules, doing everything within his power to render the form unrecognizable. Is the sonnet for him a symbol? Is his aggressively destructive approach to it a transference of another and deeper aggression?

The sonnet form is ancient, respectable, and tyrannously conventional. The rules governing it are fixed, and as complex as the code governing chivalric conduct and games. Mr. Crosland, in the work from which I took the first of my two epigraphs, is by no means unique in his almost ritual-approach to the form.* He speaks with emotion of the

'countless deformities, abnormalities, irregularities, bastardies, impertinencies and fatuities which grin at us from quite half of the pages of any sonnet anthology we care to turn over. Anything in the shape of fourteen-line decasyllables (other than rhymed couplets) that a poet of standing, or even of no standing at all, cares to throw together and dub "sonnet", is a sonnet, an English sonnet, and nothing else but a sonnet.'²⁰

(It is to be hoped that Mr. Crosland has survived to read *M.*) His emotion becomes the more understandable the more one ponders the twenty-one articles of what he calls his 'Canon'. This document is printed variously in roman and italic type, the rules in italic being imperative, while those in roman are essential only if perfection is to be achieved. The unalterable requirements are: invariable metre, fixed rhyme, a clear break between octave and sestet, an individual sestet never 'inferior in force or beauty to the octet', and a subject matter that is 'emotional or reflective, or both'. 'Perfection' rules out trite rhymes such as 'day-may', rhymes in -ty, -ly, and -cy (no mention of -sy: Shakspeare's LXI is safe), double rhymes (probably: 'Mark Pattison holds that double rhymes are inadmissible'), hypermetric lines, the device that Hopkins called 'counterpointing', 'mere descriptions of scenery, or recitals of events, or laudations of the beauty of persons, however admirably done', split infinitives, compound words [alas for Sidney's 'long-with-love-acquainted eyes'!], italics, capital letters other than the pronoun 'I', quotations from other poems, beginning or ending with a Christian name or surname (Crosland is rightly pained by Wordsworth's deathless

*Jones! While from Calais southward you and I
Urged our accordant steps),*

*T. W. H. Crosland: *The English Sonnet*. [London: 1917]

²⁰Op. cit., p. 87.

'slang, cant, foreign words and phrases, Americanisms, dialect, Greek, Latin, Romany, uncouth place-names, technical and scientific nomenclature, and names with unpoetic associations such as gramophone, telephone, cinematograph'.¹¹ Absurd as these 'rules' are", they nevertheless reflect the cultist attitude that has always been associated with the sonnet, the *Nolito* attitude of academicians in their courses in versification. The Canon, and all it stands for, can very easily become identified with a tyrannous father or father-substitute. As such, it invites aggression.

Dr. Moore's father, John Trotwood Moore, was a writer of Southern romances—the school of the mint julep, faithful darkey, crinoline among the azaleas. In a sense, he was Crosland's tyrannous Canon. I do not mean that he was a harsh father: his gentle stories certainly suggest that he was not; but paternal success, in whatever field, is to the son a challenge, and it is a type of tyranny to be overthrown by the son's own efforts in an analogous field. It is perfectly possible that Dr. Moore chose the sonnet as his medium because its strictness and its universal currency symbolized his father, first as a successful writer, and secondly as a representative of the roses-and-moonlight Southern school that he finds peculiarly obnoxious.

Nor should it be forgotten that Dr. Moore was the youngest of that interesting group of poets, centering about John Crowe Ransom, who called themselves 'the Fugitives'. The Fugitives subscribed to no Canon of poetry, certainly: they were a group of men interested in writing for its own sake, and they wrote as God gave them the guts to write. At first, at any rate, they stood for nothing except perhaps the liberation of Southern writing from the conventional Colonels, Magnolias, Juleps. At a time when it was fashionable to belong to a 'School' (there had recently been Imagists, and there were Vorticists and Dadaists and Vertigralists and New Humanists and Objectivists), they were Fugitives from doctrine. Later they disbanded and suspended the publication of one of the best of the little magazines; and bit by bit they succumbed to disguised Magnolias and sublimated Juleps and proclaimed themselves Agrarians (which, briefly, means Cincinnatus

¹¹Op. cit., p. 88 et seq. Cf. especially Canon 17. on p. 94.

¹²The *English Sonnet* is dedicated to Rafael Sabatini.

as Colonel): Allen Tate rewrote his 'Ode for the Confederate Dead', and then rewrote it, and is possibly still rewriting it; Donald Davidson's finest poems were nostalgic celebrations of the Civil War and the lost glories of Tennessee; Laura Riding disguised herself as a Table of Logarithms and moved to Spain; and only Ransom remained to carry on, in his superb critical essays, the tradition of urbane non-conformity. But Dr. Moore was a student at Vanderbilt University when the Fugitives were at the height of their power, and they must have stimulated him doubly. Their rejection of doctrine is reflected in the anarchy of his sonnets; and the individual successes of Tate and Davidson and Ransom provided him with another Canon for his unconscious aggression.

It is natural that any self-styled 'modernist' should attack the conventions of the preceding age, as Campian attacked rhyme, as Wordsworth attacked the stereotyped diction of the school of Pope, as the Imagists attacked the restrictions not only upon poetic technique but also upon choice of subject matter. These conventions are fundamental: submission to them must colour the whole of one's writing, and revolt from them is necessary to artistic integration. But the sonnet, while it is certainly a convention, is not a fundamental one. Before the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* the young poet may have felt constrained to write heroic couplets in the vocabulary of Pope; but no one has ever been constrained to write in the sonnet form. Revolt against it,—deliberate selection of it as a medium to be used in disintegration,—these phenomena are hard to account for unless one assumes that the form itself has been made the symbol of something else, and that it is really this that is being destroyed. It seems hardly necessary to follow the psychoanalysts into the labyrinths of the Oedipus Complex, as Miss Rinker would have us do; but I think we must admit that the question admits of no such simple solution as the simple rejection of a formula, and that there is something compulsive in Merrill Moore's devotion to the sonnet.

IV

It may be argued that these sonnets are not really sonnets at all, and that in discussing them as such we are talking beside the point. The sonnet is a fixed form, after all, although its limits

need not be so straitly defined as they are in Crosland's 'Canon'. It is permissible to speak of varying the form, up to a certain point; but when the variation is so radical that the original form almost disappears, may it not be more useful to consider the resulting poem as a new form, or, at any rate, as a form having no actual connection with the original?

The variation is certainly radical. The most cursory examination of *M* reveals three violations of the Crosland Canon: disregard of the prescribed rhyming and metre; a breaking down of the units of octave, sestet, quatrain, and couplet; and the disintegration of the single line, symbolized typographically by breaking it off at a strong caesura.

Rhyme and Metre. There is no fixed system. Not only do the rhymes fail to correspond to any definite pattern within the poem, but Dr. Moore is at no pains to tie up all the rhyme-words. In the sonnet quoted above, for example,—'The Curtain Fell'—there are two completely unattached words, 'given' and 'fallen' ('seen', in the fourth line, is probably intended to correspond, by assonance, to 'men', in the ninth). Often the title is rhymed in, becoming the fourteenth line of the poem: a sonnet of this type—'O Omnipotent Among Dead Kings' [228]—has the following extraordinary rhyme-scheme:

a baa bcdd aaeef"

Some sonnets, like "Twin Daemons in this One Corpus that is Me" [236], are merely a series of seven more or less heroic couplets. Sonnet 701 has fourteen lines ending with the word 'cards'. In the entire book there is scarcely a single pure example of the conventional pattern, English or Italian.

The metric is as unconventional. In general the lines are five-stress iambic, but all kinds of licenses are indulged:

*'Day in darkness, Iowa, Iowa, still
Water may yet be found to run uphill.
Mother, Mother Shipton, Mr. Conan Doyle,
Mrs. Curran, Ulysses Q. Joyce,
Water will burn, and fire, fire will boil.*

²²Even this is debatable. I am assuming that the second d-rhyme, 'Blest', is intended to rhyme with 'dust'; and that the second e-rhyme, 'here', is meant to go with the first and third, 'are' and 'star'. Otherwise the pattern is: *a baa bcdd eafff*.

These metrical eccentricities are very interesting. Dr. Moore's ear for rhyme is not keen, and his patterns are often inept; but he has a keen sense of rhythm, especially for the rhythm of conversational speech, and his dissonances are carefully calculated.

Organization into units. In the strict sense, there is none. The strict English form demands three parallel quatrains culminating in a couplet; the Italian form is composed of an octave 'answered' by a sestet. Except for couplets, Dr. Moore avoids stanza forms. His sonnets are divided into sections (he is fond of groups of three and four lines, but these are almost never formal tercets and quatrains) according to the development of the thought: if this happens to result in the octave-sestet combination, well and good; it can as easily come out eleven-three or five-nine.

The single line. In the established form, the integrity of the single line has always been jealously guarded. In theory, at any rate, too much *enjambement* is a blemish. Crosland, in his eleventh and twelfth sections of the Canon, warns against breaking the line by too many stops. One of Dr. Moore's most characteristic mannerisms is his habit of breaking the single line into two, or even three, sections, and of accentuating this break by typographical means. The fine 'So She Stayed' [424] is a good example: the last three lines are printed as follows:

*Was what her inner voice always said,
But she never took a step to change or did
Anything about it:
so she stayed.*

The statement is thrown into relief. In its ordinary place in the line it would have had force; but its dislocation gives it much more force than it originally had. Another equally unconventional device is the isolation of a single line, sometimes at the end of the poem but not always, to achieve a similar emphasis.

Most of these departures from the strict form can be observed in Sonnet 960:

THE SOUND OF TIME HANGS HEAVY IN MY EARS

I am grossly seized by the thought of Time.

*Time has camped on the field of my empty hand.
I can see Time (lacking any vision)
Everywhere, apparent in everyone.*

*Time shines on us, unlike the reticent sun,
Always—day and night.*

*Time does not cost
The grief of night, or half the season lost,
As does the sun.*

*Time has prepared no bull,
Agenda, screed, or issued protocol:*

*But Time persists, conducts, obtains decrees,
Multiplex phenomena, mysteries.*

*And if I wander further in despair,
Deceit and death, then Time, already there,
Declares, I cancel the troubles that you bear.*

The first line is powerfully dissociated from the rest of the poem, not only by the space between it and the second, but also by the fact that it rhymes with no other line. 'Time', as it were, rings down through the verses; but its echoes are always internally placed: there is no such finality as rhyme would give. This echoing is emphasized by the breaking of lines six and eight just before the key word, and by the expressive division of the poem into unequal sections, each of them governed by that word. The first three lines are unrhymed, and their rhythm is the rhythm of prose; a certain regularity begins with the rhyme 'everyone-sun' (significantly separated by a double space), and thereafter the effect is of couplets, carefully syncopated by the *enjambement* and the broken lines. The final section, a quasi-tercet, concludes on a full harmony. All these irregular devices contribute to the poem. They further the meaning, they intensify the emotion. For example, the rhythmic deficiency of the third line sharpens the

ambiguity ('I can not see', 'Time can not see') of the parenthesis. The pauses, indicated typographically by the spacing, are exact and necessary: much of the sonnet's heavy deliberation would be sacrificed by printing it as fourteen regularly spaced lines. The eccentricities, then, arise from the poem itself; they are not imposed upon it. This is their justification.

Variations upon a musical theme derive their meaning from the shape of the original theme. In a similar way, variations of a literary form derive no small part of their authority from the immanence, as it were, of the original form. It is the *sonnet*-ness of these almost infinitely eccentric poems that is the final determinant of their quality. Though the recognizable accidents of the sonnet be distorted, altered, even lost entirely, the sonnet feeling remains in even the wildest of the variations. If we could dismiss the idea of 'sonnet' from our minds entirely and think of these pieces as being merely lyrics of fourteen lines, we should lose something that seems to me fundamental. Much of our pleasure comes from the perception of the ideal form altered. This form is implicit in every poem; it is the *creator spiritus* that animates every page, bad as well as good. These are sonnets; and they are never more characteristically so than when they are breaking all the rules.

I do not know of any contemporary poetry of consequence that yields so many points to adverse criticism. It invites attacks of every kind." We can discount, I think, the criticism of the purists who take their stand on the Crosland Canon or its equivalent and assert that the technical violations invalidate the poems completely; but we can not refute that criticism which meets the poems on their own ground and convicts them of loose diction, imprecise

²⁴A very interesting one could be based upon the results of translation. In 1933, Mariano Joaquin Lorente made a Spanish version of Dr. Moore's first book, *El ruido que hace el tiempo*, which became the subject of an article [in *Letras de Mexico*] by the critic Bernardo Ortiz de Monteliano. Although Lorente was forced to abandon the rhyming of the original, and, to a great extent, the cadence, the curious thing about his performance was that many of the sonnets turned out better in Spanish than they had been in English. This was not because Lorente's work was particularly inspired. What happened was, that the verbal awkwardness, the padding, the stiff striving for rhyme all disappeared; the only things left were the idea and the imagery of its expression. In every case where the Spanish was better than the English, the original sonnet was a failure for technical reasons: the technic was too slovenly to support the poem.

imagery, and, all too often, inconsequence of substance and treatment. There is scarcely a poem in the book that is not in some detail exceptionable; and while I have tried in this essay to show that many of these flaws are not flaws at all, but deliberate devices, it is by no means certain that a device so easy to misconstrue is a safe one to employ. And we may add, for what it is worth, that the author reveals no political, social, or philosophical tendencies: he belongs to no school, he fights for no significant 'cause'.

Yet these objections do not dispose of Merrill Moore. They do not touch the real meaning of his work, the passionate humanity of these records of daily life. He is something of an earth-force, like Gertrude Stein. He compels our attention. Whether he is describing the fall of snow, or the way a man bends down to stroke a cat, or setting down scraps of conversation overheard in bars and street-cars, or relating with blank objectivity a banal encounter with a midnight drunk:

The wife says that I'd better not come home.

Which car do you take to get to Belmont Heights?

—whatever he is doing, and however roughly, he is saying things as they are. He is saying the lives of all of us. John Ransom wrote, in his preface to *The Noise That Time Makes*, that Merrill Moore had 'published himself fully' in that book. In *M*, the enormous extension of his material shows that he has accomplished more: he has written a kind of autobiographical novel. The 'I' is the neurotic agonist of our time; the poems are our own lives dramatized.

Physicians have always been more accomplished in music and poetry than other professional men. They like to claim Keats and Goldsmith as their own, though the basis for that claim is shaky, to say the least. Boston is especially proud of its Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes. It may very well be that in Dr. Merrill Moore Boston and American medicine has, not another Holmes, but a poet who in his own way will leave as significant a literary legacy.

by Benjamin T. Spencer

THE MAN WHO WAS SHAKESPEARE

THE MAN WHO WAS SHAKESPEARE. By Eva Turner Clark. New York: Richard R. Smith, 1937. Pp. 319. \$3.50.

SHAKESPEARE, MAN AND ARTIST. By Edgar Innes Fripp. New York: Oxford University Press, 1938. Pp. xi, 939. \$15.00.

IN SHAKESPEARE'S WARWICKSHIRE AND THE UNKNOWN YEARS. By Oliver Baker. London: Simpkin Marshall, 1937. Pp. 327. 15s.

I, WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, DO APPOINT THOMAS RUSSELL ESQUIRE. By Leslie Hotson. New York: Oxford University Press, 1938. Pp. 296. \$3.00.

SHAKESPEARE REDISCOVERED. By Clara Longworth de Chambrun. New York: Scribner's, 1938. Pp. xii, 323. \$3.00.

The inquiry into what manner of man Shakespeare may have been proceeds apace. In recent years we have reason to feel more certain of his tastes and temperament as a result of Miss Caroline Spurgeon's study of the imagery of his plays; and Professor Wilson Knight, considering his use of metaphor and symbol in the canon as a whole, has essayed to reconstruct a Shakespearean metaphysic. Those who turn from his plays and proceed to reconstruct the man by tracing his character from the fleeting glimpses that we catch of him in the complex Elizabethan scene are likely to find his personality rather more difficult to fix and appraise. Hence one should not be surprised at the diverse, not to say contradictory, features in the Shakespearean portrait as it appears in biographical reconstructions of the past few months. Mr. Oliver Baker gives us the worthy son of a worthy family, so admired as a player in Stratford performances that he was encouraged to go to London to follow his genius; the Comtesse de Chambrun retouches a Shakespeare of legend, poacher and Papist, a persecuted recusant involved in political intrigue. On the other hand, in Professor Leslie Hotson's picture the features, if less distinct, are certainly more relaxed and serene, those of a man who, essentially unambitious, "found happiness in the retired country" and preferred "to wag the beard over a friendly whiffing cup" to borough and county

business and "fruitless hoping". On the late Edgar I. Fripp's extensive canvas one finds boldly delineated the scholar-poet, "a striking, honourable, and lovable presence", aloof and lonely, to whom the terms *convivial* and *jovial* are not applicable; an earnest thinker, with a profound and broadly liberal religious belief. With much truth, then, has Professor Hotson remarked in his Preface to *I, William Shakespeare* that "the effort to add something new to Shakespeare's biography must... be a cooperative one."

Yet with all their diversity in emphasis, Shakespeare's recent biographers are effectively, if unconsciously, uniting to destroy the old conceptions of Shakespeare's want of learning, initiated by Ben Jonson, and of "the narrowness of circumstances" which Nicholas Rowe felt John Shakespeare's supposed poverty and provincial Stratford imposed upon the poet. To such increasingly discounted assumptions must be assigned the provocation for attempts like that of Mrs. Eva Turner Clark to prove that the playwright, "Shakespeare", was the Earl of Oxford, and that the Stratford player, "Shakspere", could have been only a "poor young uneducated father" whose brain was "filled with the workaday facts of daily living." Standing as partial refutation of such a view is the new evidence in *I, William Shakespeare* of the dramatist's association with men of rank like Thomas Russell, Esquire, whom Shakespeare appointed overseer of his will. Again, both the Comtesse de Chambrun's *Shakespeare Rediscovered* and Fripp's *Shakespeare, Man and Artist* repeatedly remind one how intimately the Shakespeares and especially the Ardens were associated with the gentlefolk of the Stratford neighborhood. Above all, Mr. Oliver Baker's patient inquiry into the dramatist's century in *In Shakespeare's Warwickshire and the Unknown Years* effectively punctures the patronizing attitude of such nineteenth-century commentators as Halliwell-Phillipps, by whom Stratford has been unfortunately pictured as a bookless and dirty town, inhabited solely by mean tradesmen and "hewers of wood and drawers of water." Shakespeare's village takes on the idyllic atmosphere of merry England in neither Fripp's nor Baker's account, but both investigators show it inhabited by many generous, substantial folk, who had a care for human rights and learning and beauty. How frequently in the 1560's and 1570's Stratford boys might see dramatic troupes on tour, and how they

might receive sound training in Latin from such Oxford men as the distinguished Catholic, Simon Hunt, who probably taught Shakespeare between 1571 and 1575, both Fripp and Mr. Baker explain at some length. As a consequence one nowadays will apply the phrase "small Latin" with caution to a curriculum that probably included the writing of Latin verses and the performing of Latin plays. Moreover, conclusions which have been drawn as to John Shakespeare's illiteracy by reason of his use of a mark as a signature and his reckoning with "counters" Mr. Baker again demonstrates to be hasty and ill-founded, showing how frequently educated people used marks and how much was demanded of Chamberlain Shakespeare in "making of accounts". Indeed, the atmosphere of neither John Shakespeare's house nor Stratford was incompatible with "the cultivated mind", which Mrs. Clark denies to the player. "Shakspeare".

To the extent that a single motive or dominating passion is utilized in explaining an historical character, there is involved the danger of turning biography in the direction of a Strachey or Bradford 'psychograph' or, pushing the simplification further, into historical fiction. The ultimate result is: "Will counted the hours by the shepherd's clock of dandelion, followed the lark in her flight to heaven's gate or listened in hushed silence to the nightingale" (the Comtesse de Chambrun), or "He could sit in his garden and laugh. Pen in hand he chuckled at the troop of jolly oddities imagination bodied forth within his brain" (Fripp). The subject of the biography becomes in a sense "created", not understood; Shakespeare becomes not re-discovered, but re-constructed. With her enthusiasm for Shakespeare the Comtesse de Chambrun has been successful in the past in treating the dramatist with the novelist's freedom; hence in her attempt at a more objective study it is not surprising that shadows of the older method hover about. In *Shakespeare Rediscovered* she assigns Shakespeare an ardent Catholic family and, as a consequence, a recusancy about which the most important associations of his life revolved. No one can gainsay the Countess' justification for reemphasizing the religious tension of Elizabethan days as a proper induction into the atmosphere in which the plays were created; nor can one fail to admit with G. B. Harrison, in the preface to the book, the possibility of Shakespeare's Catholic heritage—although the

Countess' frank admission that Shakespeare's Catholicism is by no means implicit in the plays may lead one to question the bearing of such an extensive account as the present one upon Shakespeare's dramatic art. By assuming Shakespeare's Catholicism, however, the Countess contends that she has authenticated the poaching legend by explaining young Shakespeare's enmity with the zealous prosecutor of recusants, Sir Thomas Lucy, has established a sure basis for Shakespeare's patronage from Southampton and James I, and has discovered associations which elucidate the sonnets, *Willobie his Avis*, and *The Phoenix and the Turtle*.

Read as fiction with an historical basis *Shakespeare Rediscovered* is certain to interest all students of the dramatist; read as sober biography *Shakespeare Rediscovered* will give pause to all well acquainted with Elizabethan and Warwickshire customs and personages. Hence Mr. G. B. Harrison's prefatory statement that there is "enough here to set research workers busy for the next twenty years in new directions": the chain of interpretations and incidents which the Countess has fashioned will require stronger welding by others who share her views if it is long to stand the strain of critical examination. For instance, readers of Fripp's volumes will find a strong case for John and William Shakespeare's Puritanism (in the Elizabethan sense). Chamberlain John Shakespeare apparently acted in full accord with an enterprising council which "Protestantized" the guild Chapel in 1571. Furthermore, Fripp suggests that John Shakespeare's Puritan incorrigibility before Whitgift's persecution at the time of the fear of Elizabeth's Catholic marriage led to his retirement from public affairs as "an obstinate recusant, suddenly anxious to appear 'of no account,' 'a very beggar,' ready to plead 'debt' and 'fear of process. . .'" As for the dramatist's faith, Fripp can point to his constant use of Biblical metaphor and phrase from the Geneva and Bishops' Bibles, his apparent indifference to Jesuit persecutions such as that of William Freeman in Warwickshire in 1595, and the Protestant terminology of his last plays. Moreover, the Countess' portrait of Sir Thomas Lucy is drawn in far meaner lines than those in Fripp and Mr. Baker, who picture him as "a grave and dignified statesman", generous toward the Stratford Corporation, and friendly to John Shakespeare's circle. In founding the Southampton-Shakespeare

relationship on a common faith, the Countess misrepresents the degree if not the nature of the Earl's religious inclination and his part in the Essex rebellion, only to leave out of account well-known conditions of literary patronage. And eager to strengthen the Southampton-Shakespeare bond, she not only maintains, reasonably enough, that Henry Wriothesley was the youth of the sonnets but also that he was the H. W. of *Willobie his Avis*, ignoring the existence of the young Oxford poet, Henry Willoughby, whose admiration for Shakespeare Professor Hotson shows, in *I, William Shakespeare*, may well have come through their common friendship with Thomas Russell. Finally the Shakespeares' recusancy leads on to the old Countess of Southampton, whose third husband, Sir William Hervey, inherited the sonnets which Shakespeare wrote for his step-son, then edited them for the pirate printer, Thorpe. He is the Mr. W. H. of the dedication, and it is he who wishes the "onlie begetter" (the Earl) happiness. One regrets that the Comtesse de Chambrun's tortured reading of the dedication and her failure to take into account conditions in Elizabethan printing will prevent her more critical readers from accepting her solution of the vexed sonnet problem. The more satisfactory chapters of her book are those dealing with John Shakespeare's "will" (the genuineness of which is championed as a declaration of Catholic faith), with the death of two Catholic martyrs whose commemoration the Countess finds in *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, and with her examination of a second edition of Holinshed which Shakespeare may have used and which may contain his autograph. Pronouncement upon the authenticity of the handwriting must be left to the experts. Meanwhile one must grant that the author, in her analysis of underlined passages in Holinshed's account of Wat Tyler's rebellion and their parallels in the plays, has not only cogently argued that the copy may well have belonged to Shakespeare, but has also made a contribution to an understanding of his use of sources and his part in *Sir Thomas More*. Thus, unsatisfactory though it is by reason of its facile reading of history, its hasty generalizations, and its disorderly exposition, the Countess' apology for the legendary Shakespeare, Papist and poacher, contains hypotheses and observations which may be the means of leading us to see Shakespeare somewhat as he was.

In Professor Hotson's *I, William Shakespeare* the line between

fact and assumption is consistently kept in view by his use of "probably", "evidently", "we may reasonably suppose", and "it is natural to conclude"; nor are such involved questions as that of Elizabeth's religious policy given arbitrary solutions which in turn are used as facts, as in *Shakespeare Rediscovered*. One may venture with Professor Hotson in his extension of Shakespeare's friendship into the circle of that of Thomas Russell as far as the facts seem to warrant; one need not choose between accepting the whole book and none of it at all. In reconstructing from legal records the events of Russell's life and deducing therefrom his character, Professor Hotson has produced valuable evidence as to Shakespeare's association with Elizabethan men of rank, although it does not necessarily follow that Shakespeare's temperament was that of Russell, that their "minds and dispositions. . . were congenial." The impossibility of determining when the acquaintance of the two began somewhat weakens Professor Hotson's case for establishing Russell's as the initial friendship from which others treated in the book derive. But since Russell's is the common presence in them all, Professor Hotson has with reason assumed that "the young Russell and the ingenious son of the wool dealer [Mr. Baker asserts there is no evidence that John Shakespeare ever engaged in wool dealing] . . . laid the foundation of their intimacy" at the Stratford wool market as youths, although Shakespeare was the older of the two by six years. But whatever the truth about the priority of friendship, the relation of the Russell family to the Essex-Southampton group, to the Digges family, and to the Willoughbys affords plausible explanation for many of the facts in Shakespeare's life and work. It accounts for Shakespeare's introduction to the Essex-Southampton group more satisfactorily than the thesis of recusancy in *Shakespeare Rediscovered*, though it pictures Shakespeare moving among the strong Catholic, Warwickshire families during the days of the Gunpowder Plot; it lessens the likelihood that Mr. W. H. was Pembroke, with whom Russell's step-father was on bad terms; it aids in scotching the D'Avenant-Southampton interpretation of *Willobie his Avisa* by its new light on Henry Willoughby and his fellow-students, Wake-man and Napper; and through the account of the Digges family (T. Russell married Thomas Digges's widow), with their interest in science and exploration, it suggests means whereby Shakespeare

may have found his names, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Fluellen's military theories, and Strachey's manuscript account of the wreck of the *Sea Adventure*. Thus, while *I, William Shakespeare* provides no new certainties about the dramatist, it establishes more firmly a few salient relationships. In the long chapters on the Gunpowder Plot and the Digges family the mountain of scholarship may seem to have labored to bring forth a mouse, so indirectly do the Bushells and some of the Diggeses seem to concern Shakespeare. Yet however much *I, William Shakespeare*, with its extended inquiry into family quarrels, may be discounted as Shakespearean biography, it cannot help deepening the reader's sense of the Elizabethan world of litigation, political and amatory intrigues, and family feuds which formed a significant part of Shakespeare's experience and went into his plays, wherever their setting. Professor Hotson has given us substantial accounts of events, domestic and state, that Shakespeare may well have known or seen, but even if he did not, the validity of the book as Shakespearean biography in the broader sense is not affected.

The world of Shakespeare as it appears in both *In Shakespeare's Warwickshire* and *Shakespeare, Man and Artist*—though the latter work includes the London years—is that of the less romantic though by no means drab Stratford, with its Council meetings and its lawsuits, its schoolmasters, vicars, and tradesmen going about their work in the village. One feels in both volumes the compelling honesty that comes from a life's devoted association with Shakespeare and all that pertained to him. Especially does one feel a sympathetic comprehension of Shakespeare in Mr. Baker's book, concerned though it is with the re-creation of the way of life of Elizabethan Warwickshire rather than with the poet himself. Hence there is no claim to a "key" to Shakespeare, no strained attempt to prove unlikely influences, but rather a convincing and fully documented description of the round of the farmer's seasonal occupations, of his winnowing fans and weed-pullers and ox-bows, and of the furnishings of Warwickshire homes—all treated with such a fond care for details that one almost feels himself in the presence of one of Shakespeare's contemporaries. In the course of his account of Warwickshire records and remains Mr. Baker has offered many authoritative comments on Shakespearean problems of long standing. He has fixed the location of the house and farm

of the poet's grandfather, Richard Shakespeare; he has traced Shakespeare's ancestry to Adam de Oldediche in 1389 as the first of the English Shakespeares, dismissing many other early Shakespeares as possessing merely individual names, not continuous surnames; he has added precise data on Elizabethan houses and furnishings, distinguishing between stained and painted cloths and showing their influence upon the youthful Shakespeare. Mr. Baker's explanation of Aubrey's statement concerning Shakespeare's killing a calf in "high style" as originally referring to his cleverness in an Elizabethan dramatic performance called *Killing the Calf* is not entirely new, but it is representative of his clarifying use of a long acquaintance with Warwickshire. Mr. Baker need have no "guilty feeling" at the thought of adding one more book . . . about Shakespeare."

The two admirably illustrated volumes of *Shakespeare, Man and Artist* by the late Edgar I. Fripp represent his endeavor "to see Shakespeare in his context—to study and interpret him in the light of his environment, geographical, domestic, social, religious, dramatic, literary." Four earlier volumes had been published preparatory to this present, comprehensive work, and those acquainted with the earlier, less pretentious studies are aware of the author's enviable understanding of the Elizabethan age and of the light he has thrown on Shakespeare's environment by his search through court records, especially in Stratford. It was to be expected, then, that *Shakespeare, Man and Artist* would be the kind of work that it is: no mere expanded handbook presenting an eclectic Shakespeare, arrived at through a sifting down of all the monographs that scholars have heaped about the dramatist, but rather a picture independently conceived and wrought from a rich array of primary sources and a few basic reference works on Elizabethan drama. As a result many scholars who have mastered some aspect of Shakespeare will find themselves in disagreement with Fripp's conclusions. Professor Tucker Brooke will be one among many dissenting from dating the sonnets in the early 1590's; others will feel his strong emphasis on Biblical and classical literary sources made at the expense of generally current folk knowledge and lore. In his disposition of old problems relating to collaboration and texts Fripp is far from orthodox; the New Cambridge editors may counter-attack in the

matter of the existence of earlier versions of *Much Ado* and *As You Like It* underlying present texts; there will be those to argue his identification of Marlowe as the rival poet and the author of *The Contention* and *The True Tragedy*; modern scholarship in general will object to his bold assignment of *The Taming of a Shrew* to Shakespeare as an admirable farce and "a skit on Marlowe's bombast", his denial to Fletcher of a part in *Henry VIII*, and his refusal to admit the presence of Shakespeare's hand in *Sir Thomas More*. Controversy over such Shakespearean cruxes is inevitable. But, in addition, Fripp's aesthetic judgments will be challenged by many modern critics as resting on unexamined assumptions. Mr. I. A. Richards may reduce to personal predisposition his insistence on the aesthetic superiority of Shakespeare's Warwickshire orthography over the spelling of Elizabethan printers; Professors Schücking and Stoll may well accuse him of misinterpreting the tragedies because of a disregard for Elizabethan stage conventions. But even of more moment is the donnish and respectable figure which Fripp, in his anxiety to redeem Shakespeare's character from "Restoration gossip", "sentimentalists", and "modern depreciators" has evolved. From the first sections of the book to the last Fripp is the apologist for a pure and noble Shakespeare. Vindicated from the gossip of the poaching incident and an irregular marriage, Shakespeare emerges as an upstanding youth and a solicitous husband who never missed an opportunity, when his company passed near Stratford or the slackening of London business permitted, to be with his "Godly, quiet, clinging, frail" helpmate, for whom he had a "romantic passion". After being properly "articled for three years" in the office of his father's friend and the townclerk, Henry Rogers (hence his knowledge of law), Shakespeare left Stratford in 1587 because Kemp, travelling with the Earl of Leicester's troupe, was taken with the "well-shaped" youth. In London he lived severely aloof from the Mermaid Tavern and Jonson's *confreres*, only "sufficiently observant of the loose-mannered and loose-tongued women among whom his lot was cast to write of them." "Shakespeare did not smoke—he never mentions pipe or tobacco." Even death came respectably, not from a drinking bout, but "probably" from typhoid. Yet, believing as he does that it "is short-sighted to speak of a dramatist's creations as 'impersonal'", Fripp must necessarily account for

much that is bitter and ribald in the plays and poems. This he does in part by asserting that Shakespeare's mental suffering was "public, not private". The sensual implications of the sonnets Fripp resolves by belittling the poems as idle and artificial inventions, lacking "the credential of sincerity", in vogue among the law students of the time; yet he freely utilizes as biographical quarry such sonnets as are compatible with his conception of Shakespeare. The 'black mistress' group in particular, however, he disparages as not "such as a writer of distinction would care to bequeath to posterity." Shakespeare's heroes likewise Fripp must absolve of cynicism, bitterness, and experience with evil. To relieve Hamlet in the nunnery scene of any unseemly expression of gnawing despair, he concludes the hero's mad speech mere clever feigning, and Timon's and Troilus' disillusion he makes innocuous by impersonalizing it as the Elizabethan repudiation of classical and pagan for Christian and Teutonic ideals. In its more positive aspect Fripp's conception takes the form of repeated insistence, especially in his interpretation of the later plays, that "Shakespeare politically was a Tudor Protestant to the core", a Calvinist "as all thinking men then were", though he also feels free to state that the dramatist was in the liberal tradition of Hooker and "no sect could claim him". In his evaluation of the plays Fripp fearlessly pushes this interpretation to its conclusion. *All's Well* and *Measure for Measure* become Shakespeare's religious answer to Montaigne's decadence and sensualism; Iago's and Edmund's tragic flaw is a defect of Grace; Perdita and Imogen are Puritan heroines who speak the language of the Geneva Bible; even "Ariel is from the Bible". One demurs not so much at the vigor and boldness of Fripp's portrait as at his failure to see that he has created a Shakespeare if not after his own image at least after his own inclination.

The value of Fripp's work, however, will in part be attested by the disagreement that it will inevitably provoke. Literary historians and aesthetic critics alike must reckon with it, for it is an integrated interpretation of Shakespeare that takes into fullest account the transformation of the poet's milieu into his art. The process in its more simple phases is described in those sections dealing with Shakespeare's allusions to the Elizabethan military and musical world, in its more complex aspects in the recurrent

consideration of the permeation of the Reformation into the spiritual atmosphere of the tragedies. With equal skill and clarity Fripp can relate a work like *Two Gentlemen of Verona* to its background of literary convention among gentlemen-courtiers, or show the political reference of *Love's Labour's Lost* to Elizabeth's dealings with Henry of Navarre, or sharpen our sense of a character like Jaques by defining the place of his speeches in Christian doctrine and current hatred of the French. In his consideration of Shakespeare as artist, however, Fripp has also included an analysis of his versification: his skillful use of "broken metre", his reversion to the English four-stress line, and his Warwickshire orthography. His sections on Shakespeare's legal, medical, Ovidian, and Biblical phraseology may be supplemented but scarcely disproved, although since Fripp's death Mr. Richmond Noble has denied to Shakespeare early instruction in Scripture and Miss Spurgeon has concluded the poet's acquaintance with the Bible confined to common themes. In his consideration of Shakespeare as a man Fripp includes many fresh deductions from legal and dramatic records as to Shakespeare's associations and whereabouts. His accounts of the poet's Stratford contemporaries, however, occupy a perhaps disproportionately large portion of his work, so that one may legitimately inquire where Shakespearean biography ends if it includes lives of all the people Shakespeare *may* have known. Yet undoubtedly such Stratford characters as Master Aspinall and Dr. John Hall, Fripp shows, appear in Shakespeare's schoolmasters and physicians. Thus *Shakespeare, Man and Artist* presents a singularly complete Shakespeare, such as few other scholars could offer. Perhaps one may venture the prophecy that, if necessity of reference to a work be an indication of its worth, *Shakespeare, Man and Artist* will be regarded as the most important treatment of Shakespeare since Sir E. K. Chambers' *William Shakespeare* in 1930.

The gulf between *Shakespeare, Man and Artist* and *The Man Who Was Shakespeare* is immeasurable. In her attempt to prove the Earl of Oxford's authorship of the plays, Mrs. Eva Turner Clark proceeds in the latter book from one untenable hypothesis to another. The result is fantastic indeed. Finding among the court plays of 1578-80 titles faintly resembling those of Shakespeare's plays, Mrs. Clark does not hesitate to assign such dramas

as *Cymbeline* to the earlier period, contending that Shakespeare's style is that of a generation before Jonson. Moreover, the mists surrounding Elizabethan state affairs vanish instantly before the sun of Mrs. Clark's simple assurance. Certain that so astute a queen as Elizabeth would have a minister of war propaganda, Mrs. Clark appoints Oxford to the position; and since secret and deceptive measures are the rule with such ministers, the way is paved for the disclosure that *Henry V* was really written in 1586-87 as a rebuke to Leicester, "allusions to contemporary events" being "generally disguised, sometimes only slightly, as 'Ireland' for 'Holland', 'which audiences of the time would understand.' Greene's use of "shallow water" and "worme", in his admonition to Nashe, Mrs. Clark accepts as cryptic references to Oxford (i.e., Ox-ford is shallow water, and "'worme' is in French 'ver,' the Earl's family name"). The simple dialogue of Audrey, William, and Touchstone in *As You Like It* really contains Oxford's complete story of his relationship to the player, 'Shakspere'! The playwright's use of sources disturbs Mrs. Clark not at all. *As You Like It*, written in 1582 [sic], was utilized by that "confirmed plagiarist", Thomas Lodge, for his *Rosalynde*. Oxford died in 1604. Are we to suppose, then, that Father Garnet, testifying at the trial of those involved in the Gunpowder Plot, quoted bits of the Porter's scene in *Macbeth*, and that William Strachey, in writing his account of the wreck of the *Sea Adventure* in 1609 utilized Oxford's account in *The Tempest*? What a strange business the art of creating plays becomes, with the author impelled to hide allusions to himself on every page! No doubt there is a hidden allusion to Mrs. Clark herself in Antony's comment on Cleopatra: "She is cunning past man's thought."

by Maurice Moore, Jr.

COLLINS THE POET

POOR COLLINS: HIS LIFE, HIS ART, AND HIS INFLUENCE: By Edward Gay Ainsworth, Jr. Cornell University Press. 1937.

Among those English poets who about the middle of the eighteenth century exhibited more or less dissatisfaction with the neo-classic ideals of impersonality and didacticism which had prevailed for the past two generations, the names of Collins and Gray are today most highly regarded, and justly so.

They are alike in many ways. Naturally diffident and retiring, they preferred reflection to action. In college they found the academic routine irksome but were conspicuous for literary talents. Having scholarly and antiquarian tastes, they not only loved the classics but also the romance and folklore of Northern Europe; furthermore they took pains to cultivate an appreciation of music, painting, and architecture. Partly because of their indolence, fastidiousness, and somewhat delicate health, they produced few poems, although they both planned works which were never completed: Gray, a history of English poetry; and Collins, in addition to other projects, a history of English learning. Their early poems followed the moralizing convention. Neither is remarkable for originality or creative ability. Both were excessively bookish. Each was partial to the ode, into which were poured obscure literary or historical allusions, and thoughts sometimes difficult to grasp. Yet they were usually attentive to form and structure. Dr. Johnson censured both for using obsolete, affected diction. A strain of melancholy and sadness runs through their work, which was too serious to admit much humor. The wilder aspects of external nature (e. g., the Highlands of Scotland) fascinated them. Finally they were important transitional figures in that, like many of their contemporaries (e. g., the Wartons) and Blake a half cen-

tury later, their admiration for Shakespeare and Milton led them to scorn their own age as prosaic and incapable of producing great poetry, to revive the old theory then in abeyance—though it is found even in Pope—that the true poet is divinely inspired and that invention and imagination are his chief faculties, to insist that genuine poetry should evoke a *feeling* response in its readers. Their ideal was the fusion of romantic enthusiasm with Greek simplicity and restraint.

This theory of the poetic imagination was, to be sure, more often and more emphatically expressed by Collins than by Gray. In truth, they displayed obvious divergences. Gray's learning was far wider and more profound, his human sympathy deeper. Collins's life was shorter by one third, and his last years were clouded by insanity. To-day Gray is almost as well known for his letters as for his poems. Collins is known only as a poet. Then, too, while Gray, though his odes were generally misunderstood, received abundant recognition in his day as a poet, even being offered the laureateship in 1757 which he disdainfully refused, Collins was little noticed during his life, and it was not until the first quarter of the nineteenth century that his genius was fully appreciated and securely established. This striking dissimilarity in the contemporary reception of their work can probably be explained by the difference between their most popular poems. Gray's "Elegy" (1750) is the perfect expression of commonplace but universal emotion which every one high and low can readily understand. Collins's "Ode to Evening" (1746) is perhaps the most exquisitely imaginative lyric of the eighteenth century, but it is less human than Gray's "Elegy" and, like Collins's other odes, embodies his characteristic aloofness, delicate fancy, visionary spirit, and symbolic tendency—traits which most readers of his day were scarcely prepared to understand or like. Indeed, Collins is more of the "Poet's Poet". Coleridge and Hazlitt maintain that Collins is the greater genius; and Swinburne, the most rhetorical and least judicious of critics, even declares that as a lyric poet Gray is not worthy to untie Collins's boot-strings. However that may be, no

genuine lover of poetry can remain unresponsive to the tender pity and exquisite phrasing of "How sleep the brave", the fairy-like music of the "Dirge in Cymbeline", or the imaginative sweep of his great "Ode to Evening" and "Ode on the Poetical Character".

Hence it is that we owe a debt of gratitude to Professor Ainsworth for the most detailed and thoroughgoing study of Collins that has yet appeared. Believing that the classical and sculptural quality of Collins's art has hitherto been underscored too heavily, he warns us that he is going to stress the romantic and imaginative side. His book is divided into three parts. Part I, the most important, is an analysis of Collins's mind and art: it surveys his brief but pathetic life; explains his interest in the fine arts; discusses his attitude towards nature, man, and contemporary events; contains a valuable chapter on his theory of poetry; and evaluates his bright promise, his failures and achievements. Part II deals with Collins's sources, especially his skilful assimilation of these sources, and emphasizes his eclectic tastes in classical, Renaissance, and contemporary literature. Part III traces the steady growth of his literary reputation from Gray's rather faint praise in 1746 to the close of the Romantic Period, together with the parallel development of his fame as a neglected poet.

All this material is clearly and systematically presented. Professor Ainsworth frankly admits that he has necessarily drawn generously on the many significant contributions to the subject made by other scholars (e. g., White, Garrod, Blunden, Woodhouse, McKillop). His own most impressive contribution is the really amazing industry displayed in running down and recording several thousand examples of parallel ideas, words, or phrases between Collins's poems and those of his predecessors and successors. This is notably true as regards Collins's avowed master, Milton, from whose poems the mere listing of verbal echoes takes up thirty pages. Citing parallel passages to demonstrate the influence of one writer upon another is a notoriously risky proceeding, and Professor Ainsworth is not unaware of the dangers involved. Yet it is a major weapon in his armament, so it is not surprising that his aim is not always accurate; one is liable to become so absorbed in this game of verbal marksmanship that he is tempted

to think he has hit the target more often than he has. The style is competent but undistinguished; there is, however, an error in syntax on page 35, and the following sentence (p. 139) is slovenly: "The parallel seems closer because of the resemblance to the diction of the antistrophe of the 'Ode to Mercy' of two passages of the account in *Paradise Lost*." Despite the completeness of the index, a bibliography at the end would have been helpful.

by Walton E. Bean

HISTORY AS PUBLIC DOMAIN

THE GATEWAY TO HISTORY: By Allan Nevins. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938. \$4.00.

History is properly a public domain. Unfortunately, historical specialists whose real duty is to explore it for the public benefit have too often become squatters on it. Quite extra-legally but with a great show of authority, they have staked out claims on it, sent out unpromising reports of it, and proceeded to erect forbidding and drab-looking fences around it, admitting only other specialists like themselves. Professor Nevins's latest book (which one?—how *does* he ever find the time?) not merely opens a broad gateway to the domain of history, but arranges a well-conducted tour through it, including its most recent developments. The gateway is open, and inviting, not merely to historical specialists, "the learned and authentic fellows", but to the general literate public. And many an historical student who got in through some back gate opening on obscure and narrow paths, or simply clambered over the fence, will envy the newcomer this introduction.

A number of manuals or "guides" to "historical study" or "his-

torical method" are in existence: Langlois and Seignobos's *Introduction aux études historiques*, Vincent's *Historical Research*, Fling's *Outline of Historical Method* and *The Writing of History*, Ernest Scott's *History and Historical Problems*, and Allen Johnson's *The Historian and Historical Evidence* are notable offenses. They are descendents of, and closely resemble, Ernst Bernheim's *Lehrbuch der Historischen Methode*, which first appeared in 1889. They are written by historians for historians, and the reaction of the general reader, in the unlikely event that he opened one of them, would be a dissatisfaction with their overemphasis on the mechanical, analytical, "critical" aspects of historical writing. They instruct the would-be historian to devote a great deal of care to the mechanics, and very little to the significance, of what he is doing. They elaborate a series of steps he is to follow to achieve "textual integrity" (curiously like the ritual of a secret society). But when they have told him, at great length, how to take his subject completely apart, they tell him very little about how it can be put together. In summary, they woefully underemphasize the interpretation and meaning of historical phenomena.

Professor Nevins deals adequately, and (this is new) interestingly with the techniques of "historical criticism". But he tempers the arrogance of the historical ultrafactulist, in his chapter on "Pilate on Evidence", and elsewhere. And nearly the latter half of his guide, in welcome contrast to its predecessors in the field, deals with the interpretation of human events, and with the various interrelations of historical writing with the rest of human knowledge, culture, and experience.

In American historiography, alas, the tendency in this direction has been a matter of very recent years. Dr. Beard recently complained that currents of historical thought in America were on an average of forty years behind the same currents in Europe. Probably the chief reason for the survival of the naïvely objectivist, ultra-"critical" school in America has been that so many of the founders of American historical scholarship were trained in Germany when that school was at its height, and came back to the United States to train "intellectual great-grandchildren of Ranke". (Professor Fling has been perhaps the most vigorous example.) Meantime, European scholarship had already begun to grow critic-

al of "criticism" as a panacea. The worship of Ranke himself by his American emulators exaggerated his "objectivity". From his earliest important book, he frequently confessed his faith in a theological interpretation of history, and Lamprecht, with some justification, called him a mystic. Even Bernheim, in the third (1903) edition of the *Textbook of Historical Method*, added "*and of the Philosophy of History*" to the title, because, he said, while in the 'eighties the term "might easily have alienated certain colleagues", this was no longer to be feared. Not until long afterward, however, did it become respectable in America for the historian to inquire what history was about. Professor Nevins's new guide will do much to fill in the gap, with its fascinating chapters on the philosophy of history through Spengler, Pareto, Sorokin, and Toynbee; geographical or environmental interpretations; relations of history and sociology; the significance of biography in history; and finally, the relations of history to literature and the reading public. Of American historical scholars, only Professor Teggart has treated these fields adequately before, and his works are too academic for general use.

Still another highly important contribution of this book to contemporary historical thinking lies in the many sensible compromises which it proposes. Research in the social sciences in America is torn by innumerable petty but destructive civil wars of spite and jealousy of prerogative. Time and again Professor Nevins suggests a sensible *modus vivendi* for one of the disputes that have torn historical theory apart. Both sides are right, and more besides. "The history written in the future," he says, "will necessarily be eclectic in the best sense. . . . The full truth is the only truth." He insists, for instance, that historians, sociologists, and psychologists stop denouncing each other as pseudo-scientists, shake hands, and learn each other's languages. In the rancorous old dispute about whether history is a "science", he points out that while it follows no "mathematical laws", neither does biology. As to whether history is "casual" or "causal", the result of chance and individuals, or determination and general "forces", he points out that history has room for *both* Carlyle and Darwin, and space to spare. In the question of whether historical knowledge can be objective and impartial, or is inevitably subjective and prejudiced,

he quotes Mark Twain: even the Recording Angel is prejudiced, from the viewpoint of Satan; but this, on the other hand, is no excuse for any deliberate prejudice. And he condemns equally the "literary" conception which rejects truth as such as inartistic, and the "objective" conception which, rejecting literary beauty as such as misleading, insists on a style which Philip Guedalla called the historian's occupational disease.

A final word of praise should be spoken for the choice of illustrative material for this book. In saying that history must deal not with the general alone, nor with the particular alone, but with their interrelations, if history is to have life, the author makes his own generalizations come alive with particularly fascinating examples.

by Eugene Kayden

A PHYSICIST LOOKS AT SOCIETY

THE INTELLIGENT INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY: By P. W. Bridgman. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1938. \$2.50.

"The sufficient antidote to intellectual pride is analysis." With this ideal as his guide, Professor P. W. Bridgman, trained in the methods of post-Einsteinian physics, enters the field of social, political, and moral relations. He sits humbly before the facts, to use an expression of Huxley's, observing, testing, verifying our attitudes to social and personal issues, always taking care to guard himself against automatic verbalisms and generalizations unsupported by detailed application. Professor Bridgman is not a rugged individualist philosopher in search for ultimate certainties. He is too honest, too modest, too competent as a thinker, for

such exalted enterprise. He is not a seer, standing above human ways of thinking and workaday experience. In fact, he denies altogether the isolated, sovereign thinker with his absolutes of time, space, causality, which are concepts that have a limited validity at best.

Professor Bridgman admits from the beginning that man is primarily an irrational animal and that most of his thinking on such matters as duty, law, morality, justice, freedom, democracy, the state, property, credit, and interest is simply "a veneer to give factitious respectability to actions dictated by emotions or by a common sense which has eluded analysis." He properly holds that with the great technological improvements, with the wider range and altered circumstances of our social experience, we must be prepared to revise our accepted concepts. He is not blind to the difficulties; he admits that the complexities of the subject are far greater than those of the material world of natural science. He is also frank to admit the dreadful weight of mental inertia, the fact that in the social order the individual must usually guide himself by the light of traditional maxims, that "people have to be literally blasted out of an old position before they will move on". This explains the universal lack of intellectual maturity that demands that we direct our lives by principles related to the new living needs of the day. In another place, Dr. Bridgman puts the same idea more tersely, that we actually lack emotional honesty, the essential ingredient of intellectual honesty; hence our impotence for action, our disillusionments, and our cynicism.

In the main body of his work Professor Bridgman examines the sources of social impotence, and he concludes that fear is perhaps the main cause, appearing respectably clothed in verbalism and legalisms, that behind our fears is the very fundamental hankering after absolutes, certainties, and transcendence. Man invents a logic for the formal manipulation of symbols as though he had to do with a mechanically formal procedure, forgetful that logic is an activity that demands the constant co-operation of free, creative intelligence. In practice, for instance, "right" often means something intensely desired, while the thing desired is usually something another has already managed to possess, and when pos-

sessed, sanctified by the "best" as moral and absolute. Similarly, the idea of the State appears as a legalism which smacks of mysticism, as something intrinsically different from the people who compose the State.

Sadly, the author admits that we tolerate mysticism in the social organization because it is "useful", because it is a human characteristic to follow a certain type of desirable conduct more readily if some sort of mystical justification is offered in its favor. In other words, it has social validity. Sadly, the reviewer regrets that the author has refused to follow this trail of thought which might have led to the discovery that the social order is perhaps unthinkable without the "useful" element of mysticism. It may be said in criticism of this excellent book, that if mysticism means acquiescence for the sake of society itself, it could hardly be confused with legalism, inertia, verbalism, and emotional dishonesty. The problem would seem unsolved if men are to become merely causal agents in the orderly building of society; to be at once intellectually and emotionally honest, they may only by virtue of their desires, aspirations, and biases, because human desires are the moulding forces of history. The issue is not, properly speaking, to deny the cogent social forces of desire, but to direct it deliberately, consciously, and with social intelligence.

by Charles S. Davis

SEMMES OF THE ALABAMA

SEMMES OF THE ALABAMA. by W. Adolphe Roberts (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1938. Pp. 320. Bibliography, illustrations. \$3.50).

A proper presentation of the life and career of Raphael Semmes constitutes an important page in nineteenth century naval history. The Confederate cruiser *Alabama*, under Semmes' command, demonstrated to the world the effectiveness of a steam-propelled raider against the commerce of a great commercial nation. Because of the constant fear for the safety of their vessels and the rapid rise of marine insurance rates, Northern shipowners transferred to the English flag over 450 vessels in the two brief years that the *Alabama* was afloat. It is safe to say that by 1864 at least half of the carrying trade of the North was either swept from the high seas or transferred to neutral bottoms. Though other Confederate raiders contributed in a small way, it was Semmes' genius in evading Federal war vessels that was largely responsible for this destruction.

Though it is evident that the author has not undertaken an exhaustive study, nevertheless his style is pleasing and well adapted for a popular biography. The opening chapter attempts to carry the narrative down to 1861 and is sketchily done. It is quite obvious that certain important sources were largely overlooked, for a careful study of Semmes' *Service Afloat and Ashore During the Mexican War*, his manuscript *Letter Books* (1848-1858), and the *Log Books* of numerous vessels on which he served in the "Old Navy" would have brought to light much new material on the period before the War. The next chapter, entitled "The Case for the South", is probably the most unfortunate in the book. It is unnecessary, causes a distinct break in the continuity, and is full of errors and misconceptions. Its choice is particularly bad in view of the fact that Semmes' arguments for the constitutional rights of the South have a distinct flavor of biased and prejudiced reasoning.

Thirteen of the fifteen remaining chapters are on the War and add very little to Colyer Meriwether's earlier biography. Apparently, the *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies* were used only in part, and the author seems to have relied very largely on Semmes' own memoirs, supplemented at times by those of Kell and Sinclair. The Semmes *Manuscript Journals, Consular Reports* from various points where the *Alabama* touched, *Papers of the State Department of the Confederacy*, Edge's *An Englishman's View of the Battle Between the Alabama and the Kearsarge*, Goodrich's *Cruise and Capture of the Alabama*, and numerous articles in such magazines and journals as *Cornhill*, *Blackwoods*, *John Bull*, the *Sewanee Review* and the *Southern Review* would have produced a considerable amount of hitherto unexploited material.

Only slight mention is made of the damage done by the *Alabama* to the commerce of the North. It must be recalled that Semmes was acting under orders from Secretary Mallory to "do the greatest damage to the enemy's commerce in the shortest possible time", and in carrying out this order he captured fifty-two vessels. The rapid rise of marine insurance rates after 1862 caused the transfer of a greater part of that business from the United States to Europe. In the year 1864 no less than seven new British offices opened for business, and so great was the demand for marine insurance that life insurance companies began to subsidize marine insurance departments. Even when the war ended, old confidence in American underwriters was not immediately restored, for it was 1868 before American companies began to receive their share of business again. It is the present reviewer's opinion that the direct and indirect damages to Northern commerce by the *Alabama* are worthy of at least a chapter in any biography of Raphael Semmes.

The two concluding chapters, which depict Semmes' life after the fall of the Confederacy, are quite satisfactorily done. Authentic materials for this period are almost non-existent and the inevitable gaps cannot be adequately filled. However, it is significant to note that Semmes' attempt in 1866 to secure a commission in the Brazilian Navy is not mentioned.

Nevertheless, it is to be hoped that this work may focus attention on one of the greatest sea rovers of modern times and serve as an inspiration for the future student to attempt a definitive biography.